

LA 2417

179

THE
ROAD TO RUIN:

A
COMEDY,

AS IT IS ACTED AT THE
THEATRE ROYAL, COVENT GARDEN.

THE TWELFTH EDITION.

BY
THOMAS HOLCROFT.



LONDON:

Printed for J. DEBRET, opposite BURLINGTON HOUSE,
PICCADILLY.

1796.

THE
ROAD TO RUIN:

COMEDY.

AS PERFORMED AT THE

THEATRE ROYAL, COVENT-GARDEN.

THE SECOND PART.

BY
RICHARD HODGKIN.

LONDON:

Printed by J. JOHNSON, ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD.

PROLOGUE.

Spoken by MR. FAWCETT.

Enter, driving a boy across the stage.

AWAY! 'Sblood! Run for the author! We can do nothing till he appears.

Tell him in less than five minutes we shall have the house about our ears!

(To the audience.)

Oh Sirs! The prompter has mislaid the prologue, and we are all a mort.

I suppose our friends above yonder will soon be making pretty sport!

For pity's sake, suffer us to go on without it—Good, dear Sirs, do!

'Twas most abominably dull—Zounds! There stands the writer. Well! It's very true.

One of our ti tum ti heroes was to have spoken it, who measure out nonsense by the yard;

And our chief hope was you'd make too much noise for it to be heard.

The author had mounted on the stilts of oratory and elocution:

Not but he had a smart touch or two, about Poland, France, and the—the revolution;

Telling us that Frenchman, and Polishman, and every man is our brother:

And that all men, ay, even poor negro men, have a right to be free; one as well as another!

Freedom at length, said he, like a torrent is spreading and swelling,

To sweep away pride and reach the most miserable dwelling:

To ease, happiness, art, science, wit, and genius to give birth;

Ay, to fertilize a world, and renovate old earth!

Thus he went on, not mentioning a word about the play;

For he says prologues are blots, which ought to be wiped away;

PROLOGUE.

*A Gothic practice, and, in spite of precedent, not the better for
being old;*

*For, if we tell any part of the plot, it then becomes a tale twice
told;*

And such twice telling can rarely once excite our wonder:

Ergo, he that says nothing is least likely to blunder.

*Since therefore prologues are bad things at best, pray, my good
friends,*

*Never mind the want of one, but live in hopes the play will
make amends.* [Exit.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN

Mr. Dornton,	Mr. MUNDEN.
Harry Dornton,	Mr. HOLMAN.
Mr. Sulky,	Mr. WILSON.
Mr. Silky,	Mr. QUICK.
Goldfinch,	Mr. LEWIS.
Mr. Milford,	Mr. HARLEY.
Mr. Smith,	Mr. POWELL.
Hosier,	Mr. MAC CREADY.
Sheriff's Officer,	Mr. THOMPSON.
Jacob,	Mr. REES.
Waiter.	
Clerks.	
Servants.	
Postillions.	
Tradesmen.	
Tennis Markers, &c.	

WOMEN.

Mrs. Warren,	Mrs. MATTOCKS.
Sophia,	Mrs. MERRY.
Jenny,	Mrs. HARLOWE.
Mrs. Ledger,	Mrs. POWELL,
Milliner.	
Manteau-maker.	

SCENE, London. Time not twenty-four hours.

THE
ROAD TO RUIN.

ACT I.

SCENE I. *The House of Dornton.*

Mr. Dornton alone.

PAST two o'clock and not yet returned!—Well, well—
—It's my own fault!—Mr. Smith!

Enter Mr. Smith.

Mr. Smith. Sir.

Dornton. Is Mr. Sulky come in?

Mr. Smith. No, Sir.

Dornton. Are you sure Harry Dornton said he should
return to-night?

Mr. Smith. Yes, Sir.

Dornton. And you don't know where he is gone?

Mr. Smith. He did not tell me, Sir.

Dornton. (*Angrily*) I ask if you know!

Mr. Smith. I believe to Newmarket, Sir.

Dornton. You always believe the worst!—I'll sit up no
longer—Tell the servants to go to bed—And do you hear,
should he apply to you for money, don't let him have a
guinea.

Mr. Smith. Very well, Sir.

Dornton. I have done with him; he is henceforth no son
of mine! Let him starve!

Mr. Smith. He acts very improperly, Sir, indeed.

Dornton. Improperly! How? What does he do?

(Alarmed.)

Mr. Smith. Sir!

Dornton. Have you heard any thing of——?

Mr. Smith. (Confused.) No—No, Sir—Nothing—Nothing but what you yourself tell me.

Dornton. Then how do you know he has acted improperly?

Mr. Smith. He is certainly a very good-hearted young gentleman, Sir.

Dornton. Good-hearted! How dare you make such an assertion?

Mr. Smith. Sir!

Dornton. How dare you, Mr. Smith, insult me so? Is not his gaming notorious; his racing, driving, riding, and associating with knaves, fools, debauchees, and black legs?

Mr. Smith. Upon my word, Sir—I—

Dornton. But it's over! His name has this very day been struck out of the firm! Let his drafts be returned. It's all ended! *(Passionately)* And, observe, not a guinea! If you lend him any yourself I'll not pay you. I'll no longer be a fond doting father! Therefore take warning! Take warning, I say! Be his distress what it will, not a guinea! Though you should hereafter see him begging, starving in the streets, not so much as the loan or the gift of a single guinea!

(With great passion.)

Mr. Smith. I shall be careful to observe your orders, Sir.

Dornton. Sir! *(Terror)* Why, would you see him starve?—Would you see him starve and not lend him a guinea? Would you, Sir? Would you?

Mr. Smith. Sir!—Certainly not, except in obedience to your orders!

Dornton. (Amazement and compassion) And could any orders justify your seeing a poor unfortunate youth, rejected by his father, abandoned by his friends, starving to death?

Mr. Smith. There is no danger of that, Sir.

Dornton. I tell you the thing shall happen! He shall starve to death! *(Horror at the supposition)* I'll never look on him more as a son of mine; and I am very certain, when

when I have forsaken him, all the world will forsake him too. (*Almost in tears.*) Yes, yes! He is born to be a poor wretched outcast!

Mr. Smith. I hope. Sir, he still will make a fine man.

Dornton. Will!—There is not a finer, handsomer, nobler looking youth in the kingdom; no not in the world!

Mr. Smith. I mean a worthy good man, Sir.

Dornton. How can you mean any such thing? The company he keeps would corrupt a saint.

Mr. Smith. Sir, if you will only tell me what your pleasure is, I will endeavour to act like a faithful servant.

Dornton. I know you are a faithful servant, Mr. Smith.—(*Takes his hand*) I know you are—But you—You are not a father.

Enter Mr. Sulky, and Mr. Smith goes off.

Dornton. Well, Mr. Sulky, have you heard any thing of him?

Sulky. Yes.

Dornton. And, hay—? (*Excessively impatient*) Any thing consoling, any thing good?

Sulky. No.

Dornton. No?—No, say you!—Where is he? What is he about?

Sulky. I don't know.

Dornton. Don't—? You love to torture me, Sir! You love to torture me.

Sulky. Humph.

Dornton. For heaven's sake tell me what you have heard!

Sulky. I love to torture you!

Dornton. Put me out of my pain! If you are not a tiger, put me out of my pain!

Sulky. (*Reluctantly drawing a newspaper out of his pocket.*) There; read!

Dornton. Dead!

Sulky. Worse.

Dornton. Mercy defend me!—Where? What?

Sulky. The first paragraph in the postscript: the beginning line in capitals.

Dornton. (*Reads*) 'The junior partner of the great banking house, not a mile from the Post-office, has
B 4 again.

‘ again been touched at Newmarket, for upward of ten thousand pounds’——(*Pause*) It can’t be!

Sulky. Humph.

Dornton. Why, can it?

Sulky. Yes.

Dornton. How do you know? What proof have you that this is not a lie?

Sulky. His own hand-writing.

Dornton. How!

Sulky. Bills at three days sight to the full amount have already been presented.

Dornton. And accepted?

Sulky. Yes.

Dornton. But!—Why!—Were you mad, Mr. Sulky? Were you mad?

Sulky. I soon shall be.

Dornton. Is not his name struck off the firm?

Sulky. They were dated two days before.

Dornton. The credit of my house begins to totter!

Sulky. Well it may!

Dornton. What the effect of such a paragraph may be I cannot tell!

Sulky. I can—Ruin.

Dornton. Are you serious, Sir?

Sulky. I am not inclined to laugh—A run against the house, stoppage, disgrace, bankruptcy.

Dornton. Really, Mr. Sulky, you——

Sulky. Yes, I know I offend. I was bred in your house, you used me tenderly, I served you faithfully, and you admitted me a partner. Don’t think I care for myself. No. I can sit at the desk again. But you! You! First man of the first commercial city on earth, your name in the Gazette? Were it mine only I would laugh at it. What am I? Who cares for me?

Dornton. Where is the vile——?

Sulky. Who can tell? With his lords and his ladies; his court friends and his Newmarket friends; his women of wit and his men of soul; his blue stockings and his black legs!

Dornton. (*Calling*) Mr. Smith!—Thomas!—William!

Enter

Enter Mr. Smith.

Call all the servants together, Mr. Smith; clerks, footmen, maids, every soul! Tell them their young master is a scoundrel!

Mr. Smith. Very well, Sir.

Dornton. Sir? — (*His anger recurring*) Bid them shut the door in his face! I'll turn the first away that lets him set foot in this house ever again!

Mr. Smith. Very well, Sir.

Dornton. Very well, Sir? Damn your very well, Sir! I tell you it is not very well, Sir. He shall starve, die, rot in the street! Is that very well, Sir?

[*Exeunt Mr. Dornton and Mr. Smith.*

Sulky. He has a noble heart. A fond father's heart. The boy was a fine youth—Put he spoiled him; and now he quarrels with himself and all the world, because he hates his own folly. (*Distant knocking heard at the street door.*) So! Here is the youth returned. [*Knocking again.*

Enter Mr. Dornton, followed by Servants.

Dornton. Don't stir! On your lives, don't go to the door! Are the bolts and locks all fastened?

Servants. All, Sir. [*Knocking.*

Dornton. Don't mind his knocking! Go to bed every soul of you instantly, and fall fast asleep!—He shall starve in the streets! (*Knocking again*) Fetch me my blunderbuss! Make haste!

[*Exeunt.*

Scene changes to the Street before the Door.

Harry Dornton, Milford, and Postillions.

Postillion. We smoked along, your honour!

Harry. (*Knocks*) I know you did. Had you been less free with your whip, you would have been half a crown the richer. Your next step should be to turn drummers, and handle the cat o' nine tails.

Postillion. It is very late, your honour!

Harry. Be gone! I'll give you no more. (*Knocks*)

[*Exeunt Postillions.*

Dornton. (*Throwing up the sash and presenting the blunderbuss, Mr. Sulky behind.*) Knock again, you scoundrel,

and you shall have the full contents loaded to the muzzle, rascal!

Harry. So! I suspected dad was in his tantarums.

Milford. You have given him some cause.

Harry. Very true. (*To his father*) Consider, my dear Sir, the consequences of lying out all night!

Dornton. Be gone, villain!

Harry. Bad women, Sir; damp, night air!

Dornton. Will you be gone?

Harry. Watch-houses, pick-pockets, cut-throats!

Sulky. Come, come, Sir—(*Shutting down the window*)

Milford. We shall not get in.

Harry. Pshaw! How little do you know of my father! The door will open in less than fifteen seconds.

Milford. Done, for a hundred!

Harry. Done, done! (*They take out their watches and the door opens*) I knew you were had; double or quits we find the cloth laid and supper on the table.

Milford. No, it won't do. [*Exeunt into the house.*]

Scene changes to the former Apartment.

Enter Harry Dornton, Milford, and Footman.

Footman. My old master is in a bitter passion, Sir.

Harry. I know it.

Footman. He is gone down to turn the servant out of doors that let you in.

Harry. Is he? Then go you and let your fellow-servant in again.

Footman. I dare not, Sir.

Harry. Then I must. [*Exit.*]

Footman. He inquired who was with my young master.

Milford. Well!

Footman. And when he heard it was you, Sir, he was ten times more furious. [*Exit Footman.*]

Re-enter Harry Dornton.

Harry. All's well that ends well. This has been a cursed losing voyage, Milford!

Milford. I am a hundred and fifty in.

Harry. And I ten thousand out!

Milford. I believe I had better avoid your father, for the present.

Harry. I think you had. Dad considers you as my tempter; the cause of my ruin.

Milford. And, I being in his debt, he conceives he may treat me without ceremony.

Harry. Nay, damn it, Jack, do him justice! It is not the money you had of him, but the ill advice he imputes to you, that galls him.

Milford. I hear he threatens to arrest me.

Harry. Yes! He has threatened to strike my name out of the firm, and disinherit me, a thousand times!

Milford. Oh, but he has been very serious in menacing me.

Harry. And me too.

Milford. You'll be at the tennis-court to-morrow?

Harry. No.

Milford. What, not to see the grand match?

Harry. No.

Milford. Oh yes, you will.

Harry. No, I am determined.

Milford. Yes, over night; you'll waver in the morning.

Harry. No. It is high time, Jack, to grow prudent.

Milford. Ha, ha, ha! My plan is formed: I'll soon be out of debt.

Harry. How will you get the money?

Milford. By calculation.

Harry. Ha, ha, ha!

Milford. I am resolved on it. What! Can't a man of invention and genius out-wit a black-leg?

Harry. Yes, if he will be as great a scoundrel.

Milford. That's not necessary. A keen eye, a contriving head, a lucky moment, and a little algebra, will rout the whole host. How many men of rank and honour, having lost their fortunes, have doubly recovered them!

Harry. And very honourably!

Milford. Who doubts it?

Harry. Ha, ha, ha! Nobody! Nobody!

Milford. But pray, Harry, what is it you find so attractive in my late father's amorous relict?

Harry. Ha, ha, ha! What the widow Warren?

Milford. She seems to think and even reports you are to marry!

Harry. Marry? Her? A coquette of forty, who ridiculously apes all the airs of a girl! Fantastic, selfish, and a fool! And marry? Disgusting idea! Thou wert philosophising as we drove on the condition of a post-horse—?

Milford. Well?

Harry. I would rather be a post-horse, nay the brute that drives a post-horse, than the base thing thou hast imagined!

Milford. Then why are you so often there?

Harry. Because I can't keep away.

Milford. What, it is her daughter, Sophia?

Harry. Lovely, bewitching innocent!

Milford. The poor young thing is fond of you?

Harry. I should be half mad if I thought she was not; yet am obliged to half hope she is not!

Milford. Why?

Harry. What a question! Am I not a profligate, and in all probability ruined?—Not even my father can overlook this last affair!—No!—Heigho!

Milford. The loss of my father's will, and the mystery made of its contents by those who witnessed it, are strange circumstances!

Harry. In which the widow triumphs. And, you being a bastard, and left by law to starve, she willingly pays obedience to laws so wise.

Milford. She refuses even to pay my debts.

Harry. And the worthy alderman, your father, being overtaken by death in the south of France, carefully makes a will, and then as carefully hides it where it is not to be found; or commits it to the custody of some mercenary knave, who has made his market of it to the widow——So! Here comes the supposed executor of this supposed will.

Enter Mr. Sulky.

My dear Mr. Sulky, how do you do?

Sulky. Very ill.

Harry. Indeed? I am very sorry! What's your disorder?

Sulky. You.

Harry. Ha, ha, ha!

Sulky. Ruin, bankruptcy, infamy!

Harry. The old story!

Sulky. To a new tune.

Harry. Ha, ha, ha!

Sulky. You are—

Harry. What, my good cynic?

Sulky. A fashionable gentleman.

Harry. I know it.

Sulky. And fashionably ruined.

Harry. No—I have a father.

Sulky. Who is ruined likewise.

Harry. Ha, ha, ha! Is the Bank of England ruined?

Sulky. I say ruined. Nothing less than a miracle can save the house. The purse of Fortunatus could not supply you.

Harry. No; it held nothing but guineas. Notes, bills, paper for me!

Sulky. Such effrontery is insufferable. For these five years, Sir, you have been driving to ruin more furiously than—

Harry. An ambassador's coach on a birth-night. I saw you were stammering for a simile.

Sulky. Sir—!

Harry. Youth mounts the box, seizes the reins, and jehus headlong on in the dark; passion and prodigality blaze in the front, bewilder the coachman, and dazzle and blind the passengers; wisdom, prudence, and virtue are overset and maimed or murdered; and at last repentance, like the footman's flambeau lagging behind, lights us to dangers when they are past all remedy.

Sulky. Your name is struck off the firm. I was the adviser.

Harry. You were very kind, Mr. Sulky.

Sulky. Your father is at last determined.

Harry. Ha, ha, ha! Do you think so?

Sulky. You'll find so! And what brought you here, Sir?
(to Milford.)

Milford. A chaise and four.

Sulky. It might have carried you to a safer place. When do you mean to pay your debts?

Milford. When my father's executor prevails on the widow Warren to do me justice.

Sulky.

Sulky. And which way am I to prevail?

Milford. And which way am I to pay my debts?

Sulky. You might have more modesty than insolently to come and brave one of your principal creditors, after having ruined his son by your evil counsel.

Harry. Ha, ha, ha! Don't believe a word on't, my good grumbler; I ruined myself: I wanted no counsellor.

Milford. My father died immensely rich; and, though I am what the law calls illegitimate, I ought not to starve.

Sulky. You have had five thousand pounds, and are five more in debt.

Milford. Yes, thanks to those who trust boys with thousands.

Sulky. You would do the same now, that you think yourself a man.

Milford. (*Firmly*) Indeed I would not.

Sulky. Had you been watching the widow at home, instead of galloping after a knot of gamblers and pickpockets, you might perhaps have done yourself more service.

Milford. Which way, Sir?

Sulky. The will of your late father is found.

Milford. Found?

Sulky. I have received a letter, from which I learn it was at last discovered, carefully locked up in a private drawer; and that it is now a full month since a gentleman of Montpelier, coming to England, was entrusted with it. But no such gentleman has yet appeared.

Milford. If it should have got into the hands of the widow—!

Sulky. Which I suspect it has!—You are a couple of pretty gentlemen! But beware! Misfortune is at your heels! Mr. Dornton vows vengeance on you both, and justly. He is not gone to bed; and, if you have confidence enough to look him in the face, I would have you stay where you are.

Milford. I neither wish to insult nor be insulted. [*Exit.*

Sulky. Do you know, Sir, your father turned the poor fellow into the street, who compassionately opened the door for you?

Harry. Yes; and my father knows I as compassionately opened the door for the poor fellow in return.

Sulky. Very well, Sir! Your fame is increasing daily.

Harry.

Harry. I am glad to hear it.

Sulky. Humph! Then perhaps you have paragraphed yourself?

Harry. Paragraphed? What? Where?

Sulky. In the St. James's Evening.

Harry. Me?

Sulky. Stating the exact amount.

Harry. Of my loss?

Sulky. Yours—You march through every avenue to fame, dirty or clean.

Harry. Well said!—Be witty when you can? sarcastic you must be, in spite of your teeth. But I like you the better. You are honest. You are my cruet of Cayenne, and a sprinkling of you is excellent.

Sulky. Well, Sir, when you know the state of your own affairs, and to what you have reduced the house, you will perhaps be less ready to grin.

Harry. Reduced the house! Ha, ha, ha!

Enter Mr. Dornton, with the Newspaper in his Hand.

Dornton. So, Sir!

Harry. (*Bowing*) I am happy to see you, Sir.

Dornton. You are there, after having broken into my house at midnight!—And you are here, (*Pointing to the paper*) after having ruined me and my house by your unprincipled prodigality! Are you not a scoundrel?

Harry. No, Sir: I am only a fool.

Sulky. Good night to you, gentlemen.

Dornton. Stay where you are, Mr. Sulky. I beg you to stay where you are, and be a witness to my solemn renunciation of him and his vices!

Sulky. I have witnessed it a thousand times.

Dornton. But this is the last. Are you not a scoundrel, I say?

Harry. I am your son.

Dornton. (*Calling*) Mr. Smith! Bring in those deeds.

Enter Mr. Smith.

You will not deny you are an incorrigible squanderer?

Harry. I will deny nothing.

Dornton. A nuisance, a wart, a blot, a stain upon the face of nature!

Harry.

Harry. A stain that will wash out, Sir.

Dornton. A redundancy, a negation; a besotted sophisticated incumbrance; a jumble of fatuity; your head, your heart, your words, your actions, all a jargon; incoherent and unintelligible to yourself, absurd and offensive to others!

Sulky. The whirlwind is rising.

Harry. I am whatever you please, Sir.

Dornton. Bills never examined, every thing bought on credit, the price of nothing asked! Conscious you were weak enough to wish for baubles you did not want, and pant for pleasures you could not enjoy, you had not the effrontery to assume the circumspect caution of common sense! And, to your other destructive follies, you must add the detestable vice of gaming!

Harry. These things, Sir, are much easier done than defended.

Dornton. But here—Give me that parchment! (*To Mr. Smith*) The partners have all been summoned. Look, Sir! Your name has been formally erased!

Harry. The partners are very kind.

Dornton. The suspicions already incurred by the known profligacy of a principal in the firm, the immense sums you have drawn, this paragraph, the run on the house it will occasion, the consternation of the whole city—

Harry. All very terrible, and some of it very true.

[*Half aside.*
Dornton. (*Passionately*) Give me the will, Mr. Smith! Give me the will! Fond and foolish as I have been, read, and you will find I am at last restored to my senses!—If I should happily outlive the storm you have raised, it shall not be to support a prodigal, or to reward a gambler!—You are disinherited!—Read!

Harry. Your word is as good as the Bank, Sir.

Dornton. I'll no longer act the doting father, fascinated by your arts!

Harry. I never had any art, Sir, except the one you taught me.

Dornton. I taught you! What? Scoundrel! What?

Harry. That of loving you, Sir.

Dornton. Loving me!

Harry. Most sincerely!

[*Dornton,*

Dornton. (*Forgetting his passion*) Why, can you say, Harry—Rascal! I mean, that you love me?

Harry. I should be a rascal indeed if I did not, Sir.

Dornton. Harry! Harry! (*Struggling with his feelings*) No! Confound me if I do!—Sir, you are a vile——!

Harry. I know I am.

Dornton. And I'll never speak to you more. [*Going.*

Harry. Bid me good night, Sir. Mr. Sulky here will bid me good night, and you are my father!—Good night, Mr. Sulky.

Sulky. Good night. [*Exit.*

Harry. Come, Sir—

Dornton. (*Struggling with passion*) I won't!—If I do—!

Harry. Reproach me with my follies, strike out my name, disinherit me, I deserve it all and more—But say Good night, Harry!

Dornton. I won't!—I won't! I won't!—

Harry. Poverty is a trifle; we can whistle it off—But enmity—

Dornton. I will not!

Harry. Sleep in enmity? And who can say how soundly?—Come! Good night.

Dornton. I won't! I won't! [*Runs off.*

Harry. Say you so?—Why then, my noble-hearted dad, I am indeed a scoundrel!

Re-enter Mr. Dornton.

Dornton. Good night! [*Exit.*

Harry. Good night! And Heaven eternally bless you, Sir! Heigho!—That's something. (*Sings.*)

‘Time, would you let him wisely pass,

‘Is lively, brisk, and jolly.’

All is not quite as it should be; but—

(*Sings.*)

‘Dip but his wings in the sparkling glass,

‘And he'll drown dull melancholy.’

Heigho!

[*Exit.*

ACT II.

SCENE I. *The House of the Widow Warren.*

Jenny and Mrs. Ledger.

Jenny.

I TELL you, good woman, I can do nothing for you.

Mrs. Ledger. Only let me see Mrs. Warren.

Jenny. And get myself snubbed. Not I indeed.

Enter Sophia, Skipping.

Sophia. La, Jenny! Yonder's my mamma, with a whole congregation of milliners, manteau-makers, mercers, haberdashers, lace-men, feather-men, and—and all the world, consulting about second mourning!

Jenny. I know it.

Sophia. It will be six months to-morrow since the death of my father-in-law; and she has been busy giving orders for this fortnight that every thing might be brought home and tried on to-day. I do believe she'll sleep in her new clothes!

Jenny. How you run on, Miss!

Sophia. What would my dear grandma' say, if she saw her? Why she is even fonder of finery than I am!

Jenny. Sure, Miss, you are not fond of finery?

Sophia. Oh but I am—I wonder why she won't let me wear high-heeled shoes! I am sure I am old enough! I shall be eighteen next Christmas day, at midnight: which is only nine months and two days! And, since she likes to wear slips, and fashes, and ringlets and—nonsense, like a girl, why should not I have high heels, and gowns, and festinis, and hoops, and trains, and sweeps (*Mimicking*) and—like a woman?

Jenny. It's very true, what your mamma tells you, Miss; you have been spoiled by your old fond grandmother, in Gloucestershire.

Sophia. Nay, Jenny, I won't hear you call my dear grandma' names! Though every body told the loving old soul she would spoil me.

Jenny.

Jenny. And now your mamma has sent for you up to town, to finish your *iddication*.

Sophia. Yes. She began it the very first day. There was the stay-maker sent for, to screw up my shapes; the shoe-maker, to cripple my feet; the hair-dresser, to burn my hair; the jeweller, to bore my ears; and the dentist, to file my teeth.

Jenny. Ah! You came here such a hoyden! (*To Mrs. Ledger.*) What, an't you gone yet, mistress?

Sophia. La, Jenny, how can you be so cross to people? What is the matter with this good woman?

Jenny. Oh! Nothing but poverty.

Sophia. Is that all? Here (*Rummaging her pocket*) give her this half crown, and make her rich.

Jenny. Rich indeed!

Sophia. What, is not it enough? La, I am sorry I spent all my money yesterday! I laid it out in sweetmeats, cakes, a canary bird, and a poll parrot. But I hope you are not very, very poor?

Mrs. Ledger. My husband served the late alderman five-and-twenty years. His master promised to provide for him; but his pitiless widow can see him thrown with a broken heart upon the parish.

Sophia. Oh dear!—Stop!—Stop a bit! (*Running off*) Be sure you don't go! [*Exit.*]

Enter Mr. Sulky.

Sulky. Where's your Mistress, girl?

Jenny. My names is Jane Cocket, Sir.

Sulky. Where's your Mistress?

Jenny. Busy, Sir.

Sulky. Tell her to come down—Don't stare, girl, but go and tell your mistress I want her.

Jenny. (*Aside*) Humph! Mr. Black and gruff! [*Exit.*]

Re-enter Sophia, with great glee.

Sophia. I've got it! Here! Take this, good woman; and go home and be happy! Take it, I tell you!

[*Offering a purse.*]

Sulky. Who is this? Mrs. Ledger! How does your worthy husband?

Mrs.

Mrs. Ledger. Alack, Sir, ill enough: likely to starve in his latter days.

Sulky. How! Starve?

Mrs. Ledger. The widow refuses to do anything for him.

Sulky. Humph!

Mrs. Ledger. Service, age, and honesty are poor pleas, with affluence, ease, and Mrs. Warren.

Sulky. Humph!

Mrs. Ledger. You, Sir, I understand, are the late alderman's executor?

Sulky. I can't tell.

Mrs. Ledger. Perhaps you may be able to serve my husband?

Sulky. I don't know—However, give my respects to him. He shan't starve: tell him that.

Sophia. Nay, but take this in the mean time.

Sulky. Ay; take it, take it. (*Exit Mrs. Ledger much affected.*) And who are you, Miss Charity?

Sophia. Me, Sir? Oh! I—I am my grandma's grand daughter.

Sulky. Humph!

Sophia. Sophia Freelove.

Sulky. Oh!—The widow's daughter by her first husband?

Sophia. Yes, Sir.

Re-enter Jenny.

Sulky. Where's your mistress?

Jenny. Coming, Sir.—So! You have stolen your mamma's purse, Miss?

Sophia. La, don't say so! I only run away with it. She was bargaining for some smuggled lace with one of your acquaintance, and I thought I could dispose of her money to better advantage.

Jenny. Without her consent?

Sophia. Yes, to be sure! I knew I should never dispose of it in that manner with her consent.

Jenny. Well! Here comes your mamma. [*Exit.*

Enter the Widow Warren, in a fantastic girlish morning dress, surrounded by Milliners, Manteau-makers, Furriers, Hatters, &c. with their attendants with hand-boxes; all talking as they come on.

Widow. So you'll be sure not to forget my chapeau à la Prusse, Mr. Mincing?

Hatter. Certainly not, Madam.

Widow. And you'll make a delicate choice of the feathers?

Hatter. The selection shall be elegant, Madam.

Widow. Yes—I know, Mr. Mincing, you're a charming man!—And you will let me have my pierrot à la Coblantz by nine in the morning, Mrs. Tiffany?

Manteau-maker. To a minute, maim.

Sulky. Madam, when you have a moment's leisure—

Widow. Be quiet, you fright; don't interrupt me!—And my caraco à la hussar, and my bavaraises à la duchesse. And put four rows of pearl in my turban.

Milliner. Ver vell, me Ladyship.

Widow. And you'll all come together, exactly at nine?

Omnes. We'll all be here! *(Going.)*

Widow. And don't forget the white ermine tippets, and the black fox muffs, and the Kamtschatka furs that you mentioned, Mr. Weazel!

Furrier. I'll bring a fine assortment, Madam.

Widow. And, and, and—No; no—you may all go—I can think of nothing else—I shall remember more to-morrow.

Hatter and Furrier. } Thank you, Madam! }

Manteau-maker and Girls. } Very much obliged to you, maim! }

(Altogether.)

Milliner. Dee ver good bon jour to me Ladyship. }

Widow. What was it you were saying, Mr. Sulky?—Pray, child, what have you done with my purse?

Sophia. Given it away, Ma'.

Widow. Given it away, Minikin?

Sophia. Yes, ma'.

Widow. Given my purse away! To whom? For what purpose?

Sophia

Sophia. La, ma', only—only to keep a poor woman from starving!

Widow. I protest, child, your grandmother has totally ruined you!

Sulky. Not quite, Madam: she has left the finishing to you.

Widow. What were you saying, Mr. Sulky?

Sulky. You won't give me leave to say any thing, Madam.

Widow. You know you are a shocking troublesome man, Mr. Sulky? I have a thousand things to remember, and can't bear teasing! It fatigues my spirits! So pray relate this very urgent business of yours in a single word. What would you have?

Sulky. Justice.

Widow. Lord, what do you mean?—Do you think I am in the commission?

Sulky. Yes, of follies innumerable!

Widow. You are a sad savage, Mr. Sulky! And who is it you want justice for?

Sulky. Your late husband's son, John Milford.

Widow. Now pray don't talk to me! You are a very intrusive person! You quite derange my ideas! I can think of nothing soft or satisfactory while you are present!

Sulky. Will you hear me, Madam?

Widow. I can't! I positively can't! It is an odious subject!

Sophia. Nah, Ma', how can you be so cross to my brother Milford?

Widow. Your brother, child?—Country education!—How often, minikin, have I told you he is no brother of yours!

Sophia. La, Ma', he was your husband's son!

Widow. Yes, his—Faugh!—Odious word!—Your brother?

Sophia. Yes, that he is!—For he is in distress.

Sulky. Humph!

Widow. And would you now, you who pretend to be a very prudent—ridiculous kind of a person, wish to see me squander the wealth of my poor dear dead good man on Mr. Milford, and his profligate companions?

Sulky.

Sulky. Not I indeed, Madam; though the profligate to whom you make love should happen to be one of them!

Widow. Ha, ha, ha! Oh the monster!—I make love!—You have no eyes, Mr. Sulky! (*Walking and exhibiting herself*) You are really blind!—But I know whom you mean.

Sulky. I mean young Dornton, Madam.

Widow. To be sure you do!—Whom could you mean? Elegant youth!—Rapturous thoughts!

Sophia. I am sure, Sir, young Mr. Dornton is no profligate!

Sulky. (*Significantly*) You are sure?

Sophia. Yes, that I am!

Sulky. Humph.

Sophia. And it's very scandalous, very scandalous indeed, to say he is my ma's lover!

Sulky. Humph.

Sophia. Because he is a fine genteel young gentleman; and you know ma' is—

Widow. Pray, minikin, be less flippant with your tongue.

Sophia. Why la, ma', you yourself know you are too!—

Widow. Go up to your chamber, child!

Sophia. I am sure ma', I say it is very scandalous to call the handsome Mr. Dornton your lover! [*Exit skipping.*]

Sulky. Do you blush?

Widow. Blush indeed?—Blush? Ha, ha, ha! You are a very unaccountable creature, Mr. Sulky!—Blush at the babbling of a child?

Sulky. Who is your rival?

Widow. Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha! My rival?—The poor minikin!—My rival?—But I have a message for you! Now do compose your features to softness and complacency! Look pleasant if you can! Smile for once in your life!

Sulky. Don't make love to me! I'll have nothing to say to you!

Widow. Ha, ha, ha! Love!

Sulky. Yes, you make love to Dornton! Nay, you make love to the booby Goldfinch! Even I am not secure in your company!

Widow. Ha, ha, ha! You are a shocking being, Mr. Sulky!—

Sulky!—But, if you should happen to see Mr. Dornton, do astonish your acquaintance: do a good-natured thing, and tell him I am at home all day—Love to you? Ha, ha, ha! Oh you figure! You caricature of tenderness! You insupportable thing! [Exit.]

Sulky. (*Sighs*) Ah!—All labour in vain! (*Enter Jenny*) Stand out of the way, girl! [Exit.]

Jenny. There she goes! (*Looking after the Widow*) That's lucky! This way, Sir!

Enter Harry Dornton, followed by his own Servant with bills in his hand.

Jenny. My mistress is gone up to her toilette, Sir: but I can send you somebody you may like better! [Exit.]

Harry. Obliging Abigail!—(*Looking over his papers*) 'Sdeath! What, all these tradesmen's bills?

Servant. All, Sir. Mr. Smith sent me after you with them.

Harry. When were they brought?

Servant. Some last night, but most this morning.

Harry. Ill news travels fast, and honesty is devilish industrious. Go round to them all, return their bills, and bid them come themselves to-day. Has Mr. Williams the hofier sent in his bill?

Servant. No, Sir.

Harry. I thought as much—Tell him to come with the rest, and on his life not fail.

Servant. Very well, Sir.

[Exit.]

Enter Sophia joyously.

Sophia. Oh, Mr. Dornton, I am glad to see you! Do you know, I've got the song by heart that you was so good as to teach me!

Harry. And do you know, my charming Sophia, you are the most delightful, beautiful, bewitching scholar that ever took lesson!

Sophia. La, Mr. Dornton, I'm sure I'm very stupid!

Harry. That you are all intelligence, all grace, all wit!

Sophia. To be sure my ma' caught me singing it, and she was pettish; because you know it's all about love, and ends with a happy marriage.

Harry. But why pettish?

Sophia.

Sophia. La, I can't tell. I suppose she wants to have all the marriage in the world to herself! It's her whole talk! I do believe she'd be married every morning that she rises, if any body would have her!

Harry. Think not of her, my sweet Sophia, but tell me—

Sophia. What?

Harry. I dare not ask.

Sophia. Why?

Harry. Lest I should offend you.

Sophia. Nay now, Mr. Dornton, that is not right of you! I am never offended with any body, and I am sure I should not be offended with you! My grandma' always said I was the best tempered girl in the world. What is it?

Harry. Were you—? (*Taking her hand*) Did you ever know what it is to love?

Sophia. La, now, how could you ask one such a question?—You know very well one must not tell!—Besides, you know too one must not be in love?

Harry. Why not?

Sophia. Because—because I'm but a girl—My grandma' has told me a hundred times, it's a sin for any body to be in love, before they be a woman grown; full one-and-twenty; and I am not eighteen!

Harry. Love, they say, cannot be resisted.

Sophia. Ah, but I have been taught better!—It may be resisted—Nobody need be in love, unless they like; and so I won't be in love; for I won't wilfully do amiss. (*With great positiveness*) No! I won't love any person; though I should love him ever so dearly.

Harry. (*Aside*) Angelic innocence! (*Aloud*) Right, lovely Sophia, guard your heart against seducers.

Sophia. Do you know, it is full five weeks since Valentine's day; and, because I'm not one-and-twenty, nobody sent me a valentine!

Harry. And did you expect one?

Sophia. Nah—! I can't say but I did think—! In Gloucestershire, if any young man happens to have a liking for a young woman, she is sure to hear of it on Valentine day. But perhaps Valentine day does not fall so soon here as it does in the country?

Harry. Why, it is possible you may yet receive a valentine.

Sophia. Nay now, but don't you go to think that I am asking for one: for that would be very wrong of me, and I know better. My grandma' told me I must never mention nor think of such things, till I am a woman; full one-and-twenty grown; and that if I were to find such a thing at my window, or under my pillow, or concealed in a plum-cake—

Harry. A plum-cake?

Sophia. Yes: I assure you I have heard of a valentine sent baked in a plum-cake—And so if I had one that I must shew it to her. But you know she is in Gloucestershire; and I am sure I would not shew it to ma': for, though she is all out and above forty, she would be as jealous as the vengeance! And indeed I would not receive such a thing for the world, no, not from the finest man on earth, if I did not think him to be a true and faithful, true, true lover.

Harry. But how must he prove his faith and truth?

Sophia. Why first he must love me very dearly!—With all his heart and soul!—And then he must be willing to wait till I am one-and-twenty.

Harry. And would not you love in return?

Sophia. N—yes, when I come to be one-and-twenty.

Harry. Not sooner?

Sophia. Oh no!—I must not!

Harry. Surely you might if you pleased?

Sophia. Oh but you must not persuade me to that! If you do, I shall think you are a bad man; such as my grandma' warned me of!

Harry. And do you think me so?

Sophia. Do I?—No!—I would not think you so for a thousand thousand golden guineas!

Harry. (*Aside*) Fascinating purity! What am I about? To deceive or trifle with such unsuspecting affection would indeed be villany!

Goldfinch. (*Without, at a distance*) Is she above? Must see her!

Sophia. La, I hear that great, ridiculous, horse jockey of Goldfinch coming up!—(*Sighs*)—Good bye, Mr. Dornton!

Harry.

Harry. Heaven bless you, Sophia!—Sweet Sophia, Heaven bless you, my lovely angel! Heigho!

Sophia. Heigho!

[Exit.

Goldfinch. (*Without*) Is she here?

Servant. (*Without*) I don't know, Sir.

Enter Goldfinch in a high-collared coat, several under waist-coats, buckskin breeches covering his calves, short boots, long spurs, high-crowned hat, hair in the extreme, &c.

Goldfinch. Hah! My tight one!

Harry. (*Surveying him*) Well, Charles!

Goldfinch. How you stare! An't I the go? That's your fort!

Harry. Ha, ha, ha!

Goldfinch. Where's the widow?

Harry. Gone up to dress, and will not be down these two hours.

Goldfinch. A hundred to eighty I'd sup up a string of twenty horses in less time than she takes to dress her fetlocks, plait her mane, trim her ears, and buckle on her body-clothes?

Harry. You improve daily, Charles!

Goldfinch. To be sure!—That's your fort!—(*Turning round to shew himself*) An't I a genius?

Harry. Quite an original!—You may challenge the whole fraternity of the whip to match you!

Goldfinch. Match me! Newmarket can't match me! (*Shewing himself*)—That's your fort!

Harry. Oh no! Ha, ha, ha! You are harder to match than one of your own pied ponies—A very different being from either your father or grandfather!

Goldfinch. Father or grandfather!—Shakebags both.

Harry. How!

Goldfinch. Father a sugar-baker, grandfather a sloop-feller—I'm a gentleman—That's your fort!

Harry. Ha, ha, ha! And your father was only a man of worth.

Goldfinch. Kept a gig! (*With great contempt*)—Knew nothing of life!—Never drove four!

Harry. No, but he was a useful member of society.

Goldfinch. A usef—! What's that?

Harry. Ha, ha, ha! A pertinent question.

Goldfinch. A gentleman like me a useful member of society!—Bet the long odds nobody ever heard of such a thing!

Harry. You have not acquired your character in the world for nothing, Charles.

Goldfinch. World!—What does the world say?

Harry. Strange things—It says you have got into the hands of jockeys, Jews, and swindlers; and that, though old Goldfinch was, in his day, one of the richest men on Change, his son will shortly become poorer than the poorest black leg at Newmarket.

Goldfinch. Damn the world!—

Harry. With all my heart; damn the world; for it says little better of me.

Goldfinch. Bet you seven to five the Eclipse colts against the Highflyers, the second spring meeting.

Harry. No. I have done with Highflyer and Eclipse too—So you are in pursuit of the widow?

Goldfinch. Full cry!—Must have her!

Harry. Ha, ha, ha! Heigho! You must?

Goldfinch. All up with me else! If I don't marry the widow I must smash!—I've secured the knowing one.

Harry. Whom do you mean? The maid?

Goldfinch. Promised her a hundred on the wedding day.

Enter Jenny.

Jenny. My mistress can't see you at present, gentlemen.

Goldfinch. Can't see me? (*Vexed*) Take Harriet an airing in the phaeton.

Harry. What, is Harriet your favourite?

Goldfinch. To be sure! I keep her.

Harry. You do?

Goldfinch. Fine creature!

Harry. Well bred?

Goldfinch. Just to my taste!—Like myself, free and easy. That's your fort!

Harry. A fine woman?

Goldfinch. Prodigious! Sister to the Irish Giant! Six feet in her stockings!—That's your fort!—Sleek coat, flowing mane, broad chest, all bone!—Dashing figure in a phaeton!—Sky blue habit, scarlet sash, green hat, yellow ribbands, white feathers, gold band and tassel!—That's your fort!

Harry.

Harry. Ha, ha, ha! Heigho!—Why you are a high fellow, Charles!

Goldfinch. To be sure!—Know the odds!—Hold four in hand—Turn a corner in stile!—Reins in form—Elbows square—Wrist pliant—Hayait!—Drive the Coventry stage twice a week all summer—Pay for an inside place—Mount the box—Tip the coachy a crown—Beat the mail—Come in full speed!—Rattle down the gateway!—Take care of your heads!—Never killed but one woman and a child in all my life—That's your fort! [Going.]

Jenny. (*Aside to Goldfinch*) Take him with you. [Exit.]

Goldfinch. Want a hedge:—Take guineas to pounds Precipitate against Dragon?

Harry. No.

Goldfinch. (*Aside*) With I could have him a few!—Odd or even for fifty? (*Drawing his hand clenched from his pocket.*)

Harry. Ha, ha, ha! Odd enough!

Goldfinch. Will you cut a card, hide in the hat, chuck in the glass, draw cuts, heads or tails, gallop the maggot, swim the hedgehog, any thing?

Harry. Nothing.

Goldfinch. I'm up to all—That's your fort!—Get him with me and pigeon him. (*Aside*) Come and see my Greys—Been to Tatterfall's and bought a set of six—Smokers!—Beat all England for figure, bone, and beauty!—Hayait, charmers!—That's your fort!—Bid for two pair of mouse ponies for Harriet.

Harry. Ha, ha, ha! The Irish Giantess drawn by mouse ponies!

Goldfinch. Come and see 'em.

Harry. (*Sarcastically*) No. I am weary of the company of stable-boys.

Goldfinch. Why so?—Shan't play you any tricks—If they squirt water at you, or make the colts kick you, tell me, and I'll horsewhip 'em—Arch dogs! Deal of wit!

Harry. When they do I'll horsewhip them myself.

Goldfinch. Yourself?—Ware that—Wrong there!

Harry. I think I should be right.

Goldfinch. Do you!—What—Been to school?

Harry. To school!—Why yes—I—

Goldfinch. Mendoza!—Oh!—Good-morrow! [Exit.]

Harry.

Harry. Ha, ha, ha! There goes one of my friends! Heigho!

Enter Milford in haste, followed by Goldfinch returning.

Goldfinch. What is it, Jack? Tell me! [*Eagerly.*

Milford. Come, Harry! We shall be too late! They are about to begin! We may have what bets we please!

Goldfinch. Where? What?

Milford. The great match! The famous Frenchman and Will the marker! A thousand guineas a side!

Goldfinch. What, tennis?

Milford. Yes. The Frenchman gives fifteen and a bisque.

Goldfinch. To Will the marker?

Milford. Yes.

Goldfinch. Will for a hundred!

Milford. Done!

Goldfinch. Done, done!

Harry. I bar the bet; the odds are five to four already.

Goldfinch. What, for the mountie?

Harry. Yes.

Goldfinch. I'll take it, five hundred to four.

Harry. Done!

Goldfinch. Done, done!

Harry. No, I bar!—I forgot—I have cut. I'll never bet another guinea.

Milford. You do for a hundred!

Harry. Done!

Milford. Done, done! Ha, ha, ha!

Harry. Pshaw!

Goldfinch. What a cake!

Milford. But you'll go?

Harry. No.

Milford. Yes, you will. Come, come, the match is begun! Every body is there! The Frenchman is the first player in the world!

Harry. It's a noble exercise!

Milford. Ay! Cato himself delighted in it!

Harry. Yes, it was much practised by the Romans.

Goldfinch. The Romans! Who are they?

Harry. Ha, ha, ha!

Milford.

Milford. Ha, ha, ha! Will you go or will you not, Harry?

Harry. I can't, Jack. My conscience won't let me.

Milford. Phaw! Zounds, if we don't make haste it will be all over!

Harry. (In a hurry) Do you think it will? (Stops short) No—I won't—I must not.

Milford. (Taking hold of his arm) Come along, I tell you!

Harry. No.

Milford. They have begun!

Goldfinch. Have they?—I'm off! [Exit.

Milford. (Still struggling, and Harry retreating) What folly! Come along!

Harry. No. I will not.

Milford. (Leaving him and going) Well, well, if you're so positive—

Harry. (Calling) Stay, Jack; stay—I'll walk up the street with you, but I won't go in.

Milford. Double or quits the hundred that you won of me last night you do!

Harry. I don't for a thousand!

Milford. No, no, the hundred.

Harry. I tell you I won't. I won't go in with you.

Milford. Done for the hundred!

Harry. Done, done! [Exeunt.

SCENE changes to the Parlour of the Tennis-court.

Markers passing and repassing with Rackets and Balls.

Sheriff's Officer, two Followers, and one of the Markers.

(Shout)

Marker. Hurrah!

Officer. Pray is Mr. Milford in the court?

Marker. I'll bet you gold to silver the Frenchman loses! Hurrah! [Exit.

Enter Mr. Smith from the Court.

Mr. Smith. He is not there.

C 4

Officer.

Officer. Are you sure?

Mr. Smith. The crowd is very great, but I can neither see him nor any of his companions.

Officer. Then he will not come.

Mr. Smith. I begin to hope so!

Officer. (*Examining his writ*) "Middlesex to wit—One thousand pounds—Dornton against John Milford."

Mr. Smith. You must take none but substantial bail.
(*Shout*) What a scene!

Officer. He will not be here.

Mr. Smith. Heaven send!

Enter Goldfinch and a Marker running across.

Goldfinch. Is the match begun?

Marker. The first game is just over.

Goldfinch. Who lost?

Marker. The Frenchman!

Goldfinch. Hurrah!

Marker. Hurrah!

Goldfinch. Damn the mounseers! That's your fort!

[*Exit into the Court.*]

Mr. Smith. That's one of his companions. I begin to tremble—Stand aside! Here they both come!

Officer. Which is he?

Mr. Smith. The second,

[*Shout.*]

Enter Harry Dornton and Milford, in haste.

Harry. I hear them! I hear them! Come along!

Milford. Ha, ha, ha!—Harry!—You would not go!
—You were determined! [Shout.]

Harry. Zounds! Come along! [Exit in haste.]

[*Milford follows him laughing.*]

Officer. (*Stopping him*) A word with you, Sir, if you please.

Milford. With me? Who are you; What do you want?

Officer. You are my prisoner.

Milford. Prisoner! Damnation! Let me go!

Officer. I must do my duty, Sir.

Milford. Here, here; this is your duty.

[*Pulling out his purse.*]

Mr. Smith. (*Advancing*) It must not be, Sir.

Milford. Mr. Smith!—What, at the suit of Dornton?

Mr.

Mr. Smith. Yes, Sir. 'Tis your own fault! Why do you lead his son to these places? He heard you were to bring him here.

Milford. Furies!—Marker! (*To a Marker passing*) Tell Harry Dornton to come to me instantly!

Marker. Yes, Sir.

[*Exit.*

(*Shout*)

Milford. Zounds! Let me but go and see the match—

Mr. Smith. You must not, Sir.

Milford. (*To another Marker*) Marker!

Marker. Sir!

Milford. Who wins?

Marker. The Frenchman has the best on't.

Milford. Tell Harry Dornton I am here in trouble. Desire him to come this moment.

Marker. Very well, Sir.

[*Shout.*

Milford. (*To the Officer*) I'll give you ten guineas for five minutes!

Mr. Smith. Take him away, Sir.

Officer. You must come along, Sir.

Milford. (*To a Marker returning*) Have you told him?

Marker. He can't come, Sir.

Milford. Very well, Harry! Very well! (*To the second Marker*) Well, Sir?

Marker. He would not leave the Court for a thousand pounds.

Officer. Come, come, Sir! (*To his two attendants*) Bring him along!

Milford. Hands off, scoundrels! (*Shout*) Friends!

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE changes to the House of Mr. Silky.

A Room of Business, Ledger, Letter-files, Ink-stand, &c.

Silky discovered, and Jacob entering.

Silky. Well, Jacob! Have you been?

Jacob. Yes, Sir.

Silky. Well, and what news? How is he?—Very bad?

Jacob. Dead, Sir.

Silky. (*Overjoyed*) Dead?

C 5

Jacob.

Jacob. As Deborah!

Silky. (*Aside*) I'm a lucky man! (*Aloud*) Are you sure he is dead, Jacob?

Jacob. I saw him with my own eyes, Sir.

Silky. That's right, Jacob! I am a lucky man! And what say the people at the hotel? Do they know who he is?

Jacob. Oh yes, Sir!—He was rich! A gentleman in his own country!

Silky. And did you take care they should not know you?

Jacob. To be sure, Sir! You had given me my lesson!

Silky. Ay, ay, Jacob! That's right!—You are a fine boy! Mind me, and I'll make a man of you!—And you think they had heard nothing of his having called on me?

Jacob. Not a word!

Silky. (*Aside*) It was a lucky mistake! (*Aloud*) Well, Jacob! Keep close! Don't say a word, and I'll give you—I'll give you a crown!

Jacob. You promised me a guinea, Sir!

Silky. Did I, Jacob? Did I? Well, well! I'll give you a guinea! But be close! Did you call at the Widow Warren's?

Jacob. Yes, Sir.

Silky. And will she see me?

Jacob. She desires you will be there in an hour.

Silky. Very well, Jacob—Keep close! Not a word about the foreign gentleman, or his having been here a week ago, or his being taken suddenly ill and dying! (*Aside*) It is a lucky stroke!—Close, Jacob, my boy!

Jacob. But give me the guinea, Sir!

Silky. What now, Jacob?

Jacob. If you please, Sir. You may forget—

Silky. Well, there, Jacob; there! You'll be a rich man, Jacob! A cunning fellow! I read it in your countenance, Jacob! Close, Jacob, and then—!

Jacob. Perhaps you'll give me another?

Silky. Well said, Jacob! You'll be a great man! Mind what I say to you, and you'll be a great man!—Here's somebody coming! Go, Jacob! Close!

Jacob. And another guinea?

[*Exit.*
Silky.

Silky. This is a lucky stroke! (*Enter Goldfinch*) So, Mr. Goldfinch? What do you want!

Goldfinch. Money—A thousand pounds directly.

Silky. Fine talking, Mr. Goldfinch! Money's a scarce commodity! Times are ticklish!

Goldfinch. Tellee I must have it.

Silky. Give me but good security, and you know I'm your friend.

Goldfinch. Yes; good security and fifty per cent!

Silky. Why look you there now! For all you know the last annuity I had of you, I gave a full hundred more than was offered by your friend Aaron the Jew!

Goldfinch. My friend! Your friend! You collogue together.

Silky. Hear you now! For all you know I have always been your friend; always supplied you with money, have not I? And when I saw you running to ruin, I never told you of it, did I? I was willing to make all things easy!

Goldfinch. Easy enough! You have pretty well eased me!

Silky. There is your companion, Jack Milford; I shall be a heavy loser by him!

Goldfinch. Ah! It's all up with poor Jack! He's fixed at last!

Silky. What do you mean?

Goldfinch. Old Dornton has sent the Nab-man after him!

Silky. And arrested him?

Goldfinch. Yes, he's touched!

Silky. (*Calling*) Jacob! (*Enter Jacob*) Run as fast as you can to my good friend Mr. Strawshoe, the attorney, and tell him to take out detainers for all the debts I have brought up against Mr. Milford! Make haste!

Jacob. Yes, Sir.

[*Exit.*

Goldfinch. I thought you were Jack Milford's friend, too!

Silky. So I am, Mr. Goldfinch; but I must provide for my family!

Goldfinch. Come, come!—The bit!—Tellee I want the coal, directly! Sale at Tatterfall's to-morrow morning! Three Herod brood mares with each an Eclipse colt!

Would not lose 'em for all Lombard-street! So will you let me have the bit?

Silky. Dear, dear! I tell you I cant't, Mr. Goldfinch.

Goldfinch. Then some other Jew must.

Silky. Jew! Hear you! Hear you! This it is to be the friend of an ungrateful spendthrift! Calls me Jew! I, who go to morning prayers every day of my life, and three times to tabernacle on a Sunday!

Goldfinch. Yes! You cheat all day, tremble all night, and act the hypocrite the first thing in the morning.

[*Going.*

Silky. Nay but stay, Mr. Goldfinch! Stay! I want to talk to you!—I have a scheme to make a man of you!

Goldfinch. What? Bind me 'prentice to a usurer?

Silky. Pshaw! You are in pursuit of the widow Warren?

Goldfinch. Well?

Silky. Now what will you give me, and I'll secure her to you?

Goldfinch. You?

Silky. I!

Goldfinch. Which way?

Silky. I have a deed in my power, I won't tell you what, but I have it, by which I can make her marry the man I please, or remain a widow all her life; and that I am sure she will never do, if she can help it.

Goldfinch. You a deed?

Silky. Yes, I.

Goldfinch. Shew it me!

Silky. Not for twenty thousand pounds!—Depend upon me, I have it! I tell you I'm your friend, and you shall have her! That is, on proper conditions—If not, Mr. Goldfinch, you shall not have her!

Goldfinch. Indeed, old Judas! Well, what are your conditions?

Silky. I find the late alderman died worth a hundred and fifty thousand pounds!

Goldfinch. Ay?

Silky. Every farthing, Mr. Goldfinch! And my conscience tells me that, risk and character and all things considered, I must come in for my thirds.

Goldfinch. Your conscience tells you that?

Silky. Yes, it does, Mr. Goldfinch—Fifty thousand is a fair price.

Goldfinch. For the soul of a miser.

Silky. If you'll join me, say so.

Goldfinch. Fifty thousand?

Silky. Not a farthing less! What, will there not be a hundred thousand remaining?

Goldfinch. Why that's true!—It will cut a fine dash!

Silky. To be sure it will! Come with me! I'll draw up a sketch of an agreement. After which we must fight cunning—The widow is a vain weak woman—You must get her written promise!

Goldfinch. Written?

Silky. Under her own hand; with a good round penalty in case of forfeiture!

Goldfinch. Well said, old one!

Silky. Not less than twenty thousand pounds! A jury would grant half!

Goldfinch. Why you're a good one!

Silky. That would secure something, and we would snack!

Goldfinch. Dammee you're a deep one!

Silky. Ah, ha, ha, ha! Do you think I am, Mr. Goldfinch?—Signed on a stamp!

Goldfinch. You know a thing or two!

Silky. Ah, ha, ha, ha! Do you think I do, Mr. Goldfinch?

Goldfinch. You can teach 'em to bite the bubble!

Silky. Ah, ha, ha, ha! You joke, Mr. Goldfinch, you joke!

Goldfinch. But the devil will have you at last!

Silky. Lord forbid, Mr. Goldfinch! Don't terrify me!—I hate the devil, Mr. Goldfinch; indeed I do! I hate the name of him! Heaven keep me out of his fiery clutches!

Goldfinch. No: he has you safe enough! Bait his trap but with a guinea, and he is sure to find you nibbling!

Silky. Don't talk about the devil, Mr. Goldfinch! Pray don't! But think about the widow: secure her.

Goldfinch. I must have the coal though this evening?

Silky. Don't lose a moment, Mr. Goldfinch!

Goldfinch. Must not lose the Eclipse colts!

Silky.

Silky. Pshaw, Mr. Goldfinch, think less of the colts and more of the widow! Get her promise in black and white!

[*Goldfinch* going.

Goldfinch. (*Turns*) Tellee I must have 'em!

Silky. All will then be safe!

Goldfinch. Must have 'em!

[*Exeunt.*

ACT III.

SCENE I. *The House of the Widow Warren.*

Jenny and Sophia meeting.

Jenny.

OH, miss! I have got something for you!

Sophia. Something for me! What is it? What is it?

Jenny. (*Her hand behind her*) What will you give me?

Sophia. Oh I'll give you (*Feeling in her pocket*)—La, I've got no money! But I'll give you a kiss and owe you sixpence.

Jenny. No. A shilling without the kiss.

Sophia. Well, well, a shilling.

Jenny. There then. [*Giving her a small parcel.*

Sophia. La! What is it? (*Reads*) 'To Miss Sophia 'Freelove.' And such a beautiful seal! It's a pity to break it. (*Opening the paper*) La! Nothing but a plum-cake!

Jenny. Is that all?

Sophia. (*Considering*) Ecod!—Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha! I do think—As sure as sixpence it is!—It is!—

Jenny. Is what?

Sophia. Oh la, it is!

Jenny. What's the matter with the girl?

Sophia. Ecod, Jenny, it is the most curious plum-cake you ever saw!

Jenny. I see nothing curious about it!

Sophia.

Sophia. Oh but you shall see! Give me a knife!—Oh no, that would spoil all!—Look you, Jenny, look!—Do but look! (*Breaks open the cake and finds a valentine*) Ha, ha, ha, ha! I told you so! The sweet, dear—! (*Kisses it*) Did you ever see such a plum-cake in your whole life, Jenny?—And look here! (*Opening the valentine*) Oh, how beautiful!—The shape of a honey-suckle!—What should that mean?—And two doves cooing! But here!—Here's the writing.

The woodbine sweet, and turtle dove
Are types of chaste and faithful love.
Ah! Were such peace and truth but mine,
I'd gladly be your Valentine!

(*Repeating*) Were such peace and truth but mine! La now, Mr. Dornton, you know they are yours!

Jenny. So, so! Mr. Dornton sends you valentines, miss?

Sophia. Oh yes, Jenny! He is the kindest, sweetest, handsomest gentleman!

Jenny. You must give me that valentine, miss.

Sophia. Give it you!

Jenny. Yes; that I may shew it your mamma.

Sophia. Indeed but don't you think it! I would not give you this tiny bit of paper, no, not for a diamond as big—as big as the whole world!—And if you were to tell ma', and she were to take it from me, I'd never love you, nor forgive you, as long as I live!

Jenny. Oh but indeed, miss, I'm not obliged to keep secrets for nothing!

Sophia. Nah, Jenny, you know I am very good to you. And here!—Here!—Don't tell ma', and I'll give you this silver thimble. [*Exit Jenny.*]

Enter Widow Warren and Mr. Sulky.

Widow. You are a very shocking person, Mr. Sulky!—The wild man of the woods broke loose! Do return to your keeper, good Orang Outang; and don't go about to terrify children!

Sulky. I tell you, Madam, Mr. Milford is arrested.

Sophia. My brother?

Sulky. Locked up at a bailiff's in the next street.

Sophia.

Sophia. Oh dear!

Widow. And pray now what is that to me?

Sulky. Madam!

Widow. I am not arrested.

Sulky. Would you were!

Widow. Oh the savage!

Sulky. The pitiless only should feel pain. The stony-hearted alone should be enclosed by walls of stone.

Sophia. Don't be cross with ma', Sir: I'm sure she'll release my brother.

Widow. You are sure, minikin!

Sophia. Yes, ma'; for I am sure no soul on earth would suffer a fellow creature to lie and pine to death, in a frightful dark dungeon, and fed with bread and water!

Sulky. Your late husband recommended the payment of his son's debts.

Widow. Recommended?

Sulky. Yes.

Widow. But leaving it to my own prudence.

Sulky. More's the pity.

Widow. Which prudence I shall follow.

Sulky. It will be the first time in your life—You never yet followed prudence, you always ran before it.

Sophia. Nah come, dear ma', I am sure you have a pitiful heart! I am sure you could not rest in your bed if my poor brother was in prison!

Widow. Hold your prattle, child!

Sophia. Ah! I'm sure you'll make him happy, and pay his debts!

Widow. Why, Jenny?

[Calling.

Sulky. You won't?

Widow. Jenny!

[Enter Jenny.

Sophia. La, dear Sir, have patience—

Sulky. You are an angel!—And you are—! [Exit.

Sophia. Pray, pray, Sir, do stay! [Exit following.

Widow. I am glad the monster is gone! He is a very intolerable person!—Pray, Jenny, how did it happen that Mr. Dornton went away without seeing me?

Enter Servant and Mr. Silky.

Servant. Mr. Silky, Madam,

Widow.

Widow. Leave us, Jenny. (*Exit Jenny*) So, Mr. Silky—What is this very urgent business of yours?

Silky. (*Looking round*) Are we safe, Madam? Will nobody interrupt us; nobody overhear us?

Widow. No, no—But what is the meaning of all this caution?

Silky. (*After fastening the door and carefully drawing the Will from his pocket*) Do you know this hand-writing, Madam?

Widow. Ah!—It is my poor old dear man's, I see.

Silky. You have heard of a will he left in France?

Widow. Pshaw! Will indeed? He left no will!

Silky. Yes, he did, madam.

Widow. I won't believe it! He loved me too well to rob me of a single guinea! Poor simple soul! I was his darling!

Silky. His darling, madam?—With your permission, I will just read a single clause in which his darling is mentioned! Look, madam; it is the alderman's hand! (*Reads*)

‘ But as I have sometimes painfully suspected the excessive
‘ affection which my said wife, Winifred Warren, pro-
‘ fessed for me during my decline, and that the solemn pro-
‘ testations she made never to marry again, should she sur-
‘ vive me, were both done with sinister views, it is my
‘ will, that, should she marry, or give a legal promise of
‘ marriage, written or verbal, that she shall be cut off
‘ with an annuity of six hundred a year; and the residue
‘ of my effects in that case to be equally divided between
‘ my natural son, John Milford, and my wife's daughter,
‘ Sophia Freelove.’

Widow. Six hundred a year! An old dotard! “ To
“ imagine that a woman of my elegant ideas could exist on
“ six hundred a year!” Brute! Monster! I hate him now
as heartily as when he was alive! But pray, Sir, how came
you by this will?

Silky. Why it was odd enough! And yet easy enough!
My name is Silky, Madam—

Widow. Well?

Silky. And you know the executor's name is Sulky—

Widow. Well?

Silky. The gentleman that delivered it only made a mis-
take

take of a letter, and gave it to Mr. Silky instead of to Mr. Sulky!

Widow. And where is that gentleman?

Silky. Ah, poor man!—He is dead!

Widow. Dead?

Silky. And gone!—Was taken ill the very night he parted from me, went to his hotel, was put to bed in a high fever, and carried off in less than a week.

Widow. And does Mr. Sulky know of this will being delivered?

Silky. Not a syllable! It's all close and smooth!

Widow. So much the better—Come, give it me, and—

Silky. Excuse me there, Madam! I can't do that!

Widow. Why so?

Silky. My conscience won't let me! I must provide for my family!

Widow. And pray what provision is this will to make for your family, Mr. Silky?

Silky. Why, Madam, I have a proposal—You know the power of your own charms!

Widow. Which I believe is more than you do, Mr. Silky—

Silky. Hah! Don't say so, Madam! Don't say so!—Would I were a handsome, rich and well-born youth!—But you know Mr. Goldfinch?—Ah, ha, ha, ha! I could tell you a secret!

Widow. What, that he is dying for me, I suppose?

Silky. Ah!—So smitten!—Talks of nothing else!

Widow. And is that any secret, think you?

Silky. The alderman, I find, died worth more than a plum and a half—

Widow. Well?

Silky. I have talked the matter over with my friend, Mr. Goldfinch; and he thinks it but reasonable, that, for a secret of so much importance, which would almost sweep the whole away, I should receive one third.

Widow. Fifty thousand pounds, Mr. Silky?

Silky. I can't take less.

Widow. Why you are a greater rogue than even I thought you!

Silky. Lord, Madam, it's no roguery! It's only a knowledge of the world! A young husband with a hundred thousand

thousand pounds, or poor six hundred a year without any husband!

Widow. You are a very shocking old miser, Mr. Silky! A very repulsive sort of a person! What heart you had is turned to stone! You are insensible of the power of a pair of fine eyes! But I have made a conquest that places me beyond your reach—I mean to marry Mr. Dornton—

Silky. (*Surprised*) What! Old Mr. Dornton, Madam?

Widow. Old Mr. Dornton, man?—I never saw the figure in my life! No! The gay and gallant young Mr. Dornton! The pride of the city, and the lawful monarch of my bleeding heart!

Silky. Ha, ha, ha! Young Mr. Dornton!

Widow. So you may take your will and light your fires with it! You will not make a penny of it in any other way. Mr. Sulky, the executor, is Mr. Dornton's partner, and when I marry Mr. Dornton he will never inflict the absurd penalty.

Silky. Ha, ha, ha! No, Madam! When you marry Mr. Dornton, that he certainly never will! But if any accident should happen to prevent the match, you will then let me hear from you?

Widow. Lord, good man! Don't mention the horrid idea! Do leave me to my delightful meditations! I would indulge in soft sensibility and dreams of bliss; and not be disturbed by dead men's wills, or the sordid extortions of an avaricious old rogue!

Silky. Very well, Madam! The secret for the present remains between ourselves! You'll be silent for your own sake! Only remember, ha, ha, ha! If you should want me, I live at Number 40. My name is on the door.—Ha, ha, ha! Mr. Dornton!—Good morning, Madam!—Mr. Dornton! Ha, ha, ha!—You'll send if you should want me?

[*Exit laughing.*]

Widow. Jenny! (*Calling.*)

Enter Jenny.

Jenny. Ma'am!

Widow. As I was saying, Jenny, pray how did it happen that Mr. Dornton went away without seeing me?

Jenny. Indeed, ma'am, I don't know.

Widow. Cruel youth!

Jenny.

Jenny. I'm sure, ma'am, I wonder how you can like him better than Mr. Goldfinch!

Widow. Mr. Goldfinch is very well, Jenny—But Mr. Dornton! Oh incomparable!

Jenny. I am sure, ma'am, if I was a rich lady, and a handsome lady, and a fine lady, like you, I should say Mr. Goldfinch for my money!

Widow. Should you, Jenny?—Well, I don't know—
(*Languishing.*)

Goldfinch. (*Without*) Tellee I must see her.

Widow. As I live, here he comes!—He is such a boisterous person! (*Goes to the glass*) How do I look, Jenny? I protest my face is of all colours!

Jenny. (*Significantly after examining*) You had better go up to your toilette for a minute.

Widow. That smooth-tongued old extortioner has put me into such a flutter—Don't let him go, Jenny.

Jenny. Never fear, ma'am.

Widow. I'll not stay too long.

[*Exit.*]

Enter Goldfinch, his Clothes, Hat, and Boots dirtied by a Fall.

Goldfinch. Here I am—All alive.

Jenny. Dear! What's the matter?

Goldfinch. Safe and sound! Fine kick up!

Jenny. Have you been thrown?

Goldfinch. Pitched five-and-twenty feet into a ditch—
Soufe!

Jenny. Dear me!

Goldfinch. Pretty commence!—No matter—Limbs whole—Heart sound—That's your fort!

Jenny. Where did it happen?

Goldfinch. Bye road—Back of Islington—Had them tight in hand too—Came to a short turn and a narrow lane—Up flew a damned dancing-master's umbrella—Bounce—Off they went—Road repairing—Wheelbarrow in the way—Crash—Out flew I—Whiz—Fire flashed—Lay stunned—Got up—Looked foolish—Shafts broke—Snarler and Blackguard both down—Black-and-all-black paying away, pannels smashed, traces cut, Snarler lamed.

Jenny. Terrible!

Goldfinch. Damned mad!—Curfed a few, cut up Black-and-

and-all-black, horsewhipped Tom, took coach and drove here like a devil in a whirlwind!

Jenny. 'Tis very well your neck's not broke!

Goldfinch. Little stiff—No matter—Damn all dancing-masters and their umbrellas!

Jenny. You had better have been here, Mr. Goldfinch. You stand so long shilly shally, that you'll be cut out at last. If you had but a licence now in your pocket, I'd undertake to have you married in half an hour!

Goldfinch. Do you think so?

Jenny. Think? I'm sure on't.

Goldfinch. Dammee, I'll post away and get one—Must not lose her; the game's up if I do!—Must have her!—Be true to me, and I'll secure you the hundred! I'll be back from the Commons in a smack!

Enter the Widow Warren.

Goldfinch. Ah! Widow! Here am I! (*Runs up to her, kisses her boisterously, and dirties her clothes.*)

Widow. I protest, Mr. Goldfinch—! Was ever the like!—(*Looking at herself.*)

Goldfinch. Never mind, brush off—I'm the lad!—Been to Hatchet's—Bespoke the wedding-coach.

Widow. But—Sir—

Goldfinch. Pannels stripe painted—Hammer-cloth fringed—Green and white—Curtains festooned—Patent wheels—Silver furniture—All flash—Light as a bandbox—Trundle and spin after my greys like a Tandem down hill—Pass—Shew 'em the road—Whurr—Whizz-gig!—That's your sort!

Widow. It will be superb!

Goldfinch. Superb? (*With contempt*)—Tellee it will be the thing!—The go—the stare—the gape—the gaze!—The rich widow and the tight one!—There they go!—Away they bowl!—That's your sort!

Widow. You have a taste for these things, Mr. Goldfinch!

Goldfinch. Taste!—Believe I have—Who more?—Phaeton and Curricles, Parks and Pleasure-grounds—Up hill and down—High-ways and bye-ways—I'm the boy that shall drive you!—

Widow. Pardon me, Mr. Goldfinch; if a certain event
were

were by the wise disposition of Providence to take place, I should think proper to drive.

Goldfinch. You drive!—If you do, damn me!

Widow. Sir!

Goldfinch. I'm christened and called Charles—Charles Goldfinch—The knowing Lad that's not to be had—Winter and Summer—Fair weather and foul—Low ruts or no ruts—Never take a false quarter—No, no, Widow—I drive—Hayait!—Ah!—Ah! Get on!—St—St—Touch White-foot in the flank—Tickle Snarler in the ear—Cut up the Yelper—Take out a fly's eye—Smack, crack—That's your fort!

Widow. I assure you, Mr. Goldfinch, you entertain very improper suppositions concerning—

Goldfinch. Go for the licence—(*Going*)

Widow. Nay but surely, Mr.—

Goldfinch. Go for the licence—Resolved—Taken it here. (*Pointing to his forehead*)

Widow. If retrospect and—and affection threw no other obstacles in the way—Yet the—the world—Prudence.

Goldfinch. The World!—Prudence!—Damn the World—Damn Prudence.

Widow. Oh but, Sir—

Goldfinch. The world nor nobody else has nothing to do with neither your prudence nor mine—We'll be married immediately—

Widow. Immediately, Mr. Goldfinch!—I—(*Undecided*)

Goldfinch. What, you won't?

Widow. Nay, Mr. Goldfinch—I—do not—absolutely renunciate—But I—wish—

Goldfinch. It was over—Know you do—Go for the licence—

Widow. Pray—Dear Mr. Goldfinch—

Goldfinch. Go for the licence, I tellee.

Widow. Only a word—

Goldfinch. To the wife—I'm he—Go for the licence—That's your fort! [*Exit.*

Widow. Mr. Goldfinch!—I declare— [*Exit following.*

THE ROAD TO RUIN.

47

Scene changes to the House of Dornton.

Mr. Dornton and Mr. Smith.

Dornton. Still the same hurry, the same crowd, Mr. Smith?

Mr. Smith. Much the same, Sir: the house never experienced a day like this! Mr. Sulky thinks we shall never get through.

Dornton. Is Milford taken?

Mr. Smith. Yes, Sir.

Dornton. Unprincipled prodigal! My son owes his ruin to him alone. But he shall suffer!

Mr. Smith. My young master's tradesmen are waiting.

Dornton. Bid them come in. (*Exit Mr. Smith*) All my own fault, my own fond folly! Denied him nothing, encouraged him to spend; and now the unnatural father can coolly think of turning him on the wide pitiless world; there to starve, pine in a prison, rot in dungeons, among agues, rheums and loathsome diseases.

Re-enter Mr. Smith followed by Tradesmen.

Mr. Smith. This way, gentlemen!

Dornton. Zounds! What an army!—A vile thoughtless profligate!—Yes, yes, misery be his portion; he merits it!

Enter Servant.

Servant. (*To Mr. Dornton*) You are wanted in the counting-house, Sir.

Dornton. Very well. I'll be with you in a moment, gentlemen—Abandoned spendthrift!

[*Exit followed by Mr. Smith.*]

First T. I don't like all this! What does it mean?

Second T. Danger!

Third T. He has been a good customer—None of your punctual paymasters, that look over their accounts.

First T. Oh, a different thing! Nothing to be got by them—Always take care to affront them.

Second T. Perhaps it is a trick of the old gentleman, to inspect into our charges.

Third T.

Third T. I don't like that—Rather hear of any tax than of taxing my bill.

First T. Humph! Tradesmen begin to understand these things, and allow a reasonable profit!

Second T. Can't have less than fifty per cent. for retail credit trade!

Third T. To be sure not; if a man would live in style, and save a fortune as he ought.

First T. Hush! Mind—All devilish hard run!

Omnes. Certainly!

First T. Not a guinea in the house!—To morrow's Saturday—Hem!

Re-enter Mr. Dornton.

Dornton. Your servant, gentlemen, your servant. Pray how happens it that you bring your accounts in here?

First T. We received notice, Sir.

Dornton. You have none of you any demands upon me?

First T. Happy to serve you, Sir.

Second T. We shall be all glad of your custom, Sir.

Omnes. All, all!

Dornton. And do you come expecting to be paid?

First T. Money, Sir, is always agreeable?

Second T. Tradesmen find it a scarce commodity!

Third T. Bills come round quick!

Fourth T. Workmen must eat!

Second T. For my part, I always give a gentleman, who is a gentleman, his own time.

Dornton. I understand you!—And what are you, Sir, who seem to stand apart from the rest?

Hosier. A hosier, Sir. I am unworthy the company of these honest gentlemen, who live in style. I never affront a punctual paymaster, not I: and, what they will think strange, I get more by those who do look over their bills, than those who do not!

First T. Humph! }

Second T. Blab! }

Third T. Shab! }

[*Aside.*]

Dornton. And what may be the amount of your bill, Sir?

Hosier. A trifle, for which I have no right to ask.

Dornton. No right! What do you mean?

Hosier.

Hosier. Your son, Sir, made me what I am; redeemed me and my family from ruin; and it would be an ill requital of his goodness to come here, like a dun, at such a time as this; when I would rather, if that could help him, give him every shilling I have in the world.

Dornton. Would you? Would you? (*Greatly affected*)—You look like an honest man!—But what do you do here then?

Hosier. Mr. Dornton, Sir, knew I should be unwilling to come, and sent me word he would never speak to me more if I did not; and, rather than offend him, I would even come here on a business like this.

Dornton. (*Shakes him by the hand*) You are an honest fellow! An unaccountable—! And so Harry has been your friend?

Hosier. Yes, Sir; a liberal-minded friend; for he lent me money, though I was sincere enough to tell him of his faults.

Dornton. Zounds, Sir! How came you to be a weaver of stockings?

Hosier. I don't know, Sir, how I came to be at all; I only know that here I am.

Dornton. A philosopher!

Hosier. I am not fond of titles, Sir—I'm a man.

Dornton. Why is it not a shame, now, that the soul of Socrates should have crept and hid itself in the body of a stocking-weaver? Give me your bill!

Hosier. Excuse me, Sir.

Dornton. Give me your bill, I tell you! I'll pay this bill myself.

Hosier. I cannot, must not, Sir.

Dornton. Sir, I insist on—(*Enter Harry Dornton*) So, Sir! (*Turning angrily round*) Why have you assembled these people into whose debt you have dishonestly run, wanting the power to pay; and who have as dishonestly trusted you, hoping to profit exorbitantly by your extravagance?

Harry. Oh, Sir, you don't know them! They are a very complaisant, indulgent kind of people. Are not you gentlemen?

First T. Certainly, Sir.

Omnes. Certainly.

Harry. Be kind enough to wait a few minutes without,

D

my

my very good friends. (*Exeunt Tradesmen.*) Mr. Williams—(*Takes his hand*)

Hosier. Sir—

[*Exit.*]

Dornton. How dare you introduce this swarm of locusts here? How dare you?

Harry. (*With continued good humour*) Despair, Sir, is a dauntless hero.

Dornton. Have you the effrontery to suppose that I can or shall pay them?—What is it you mean?

Harry. To let you see I have creditors.

Dornton. Cheats! Bloodsuckers!

Harry. Some of them: but that is my fault—They must be paid.

Dornton. Paid!

Harry. The innocent must not suffer for the guilty.

Dornton. You will die in an alms-house!

Harry. May be so; but the orphan's and the widow's curse shall not meet me there!

Dornton. Harry!—Zounds! (*Checking his fondness*) Paid! Whom do you mean to rob?

Harry. My name is Dornton, Sir.

Dornton. Are you not—? (*Wanting words.*)

Harry. Yes, Sir.

Dornton. Quit the room! Begone!

Harry. You are the best of men, Sir, and I—! But I hate whining. Repentance is a pitiful scoundrel, that never brought back a single yesterday. Amendment is a fellow of more mettle—But it is too late—Suffer I ought, and suffer I must—My debts of honour discharged, do not let my tradesmen go unpaid.

Dornton. You have ruined me!

Harry. The whole is but five thousand pounds!

Dornton. But?—The counter is loaded with the destruction you have brought upon us all!

Harry. No, no—I have been a sad fellow, but not even my extravagance can shake this house.

Enter Mr. Smith, in consternation.

Mr. Smith. Bills are pouring in so fast upon us we shall never get through!

Harry. (*Astound: seized almost with horror*) What!—What is that you say?

Mr. Smith.

Mr. Smith. We have paid our light gold so often over that the people are very surly!

Dornton. Pay it no more!—Sell it instantly for what it is worth, disburse the last guinea, and shut up the doors!

Harry. (*Taking Mr. Smith aside: with terror*) Are you serious?

Mr. Smith. Sir!

Harry. (*With dreadful anguish*) Are you serious, I say?—Is it not some trick to impose upon me?

Mr. Smith. Look into the shop, Sir, and convince yourself!—If we have not a supply in half an hour we must stop! [Exit.

Harry. (*Wildly*) Tol de rol—My father!—Sir! (*Turning away*) Is it possible?—Disgraced?—Ruined?—In reality ruined?—By me?—Are these things so?—(*Momentary fury*) Tol de rol—

Dornton. Harry!—How you look!—You frighten me!

Harry. (*Starting*) It shall be done!

Dornton. What do you mean?—Calm yourself, Harry!

Harry. Ay! By Heaven!

Dornton. Hear me, Harry!

Harry. This instant! (*Going*)

Dornton. (*Calling*) Harry!

Harry. Don't droop! (*Returning*) Don't despair! I'll find relief—(*Aside*) First to my friend—He cannot fail? But if he should!—Why ay, then to Megæra!—I will marry her, in such a cause, were she fifty widows and fifty furies!

Dornton. Calm yourself, Harry!

Harry. I am calm! Very calm!—It shall be done!—Don't be dejected—You are my father—You were the first of men in the first of cities—Revered by the good, and respected by the great—You flourished prosperously!—But you had a son!—I remember it!

Dornton. Why do you roll your eyes, Harry?

Harry. I won't be long away!

Dornton. Stay where you are, Harry! (*Catching his hand*) All will be well! I am very happy! Do not leave me!—I am very happy!—Indeed I am, Harry!—Very happy!

Harry. Tol de rol—Heaven bless you, Sir! You are a worthy gentleman!—I'll not be long!

Dornton. Hear me, Harry!—I am very happy!

Enter a Clerk.

Clerk. Mr. Smith, Sir, desires to know whether we may send to the Bank for a thousand pounds worth of silver.

Harry. (Furiously) No, scoundrel!

[Breaks away and Exit.]

Dornton. (Calling and almost sobbing) Harry!—Harry! —I am very happy!—Harry Dornton! *(In a kind of stupor)* I am very happy!—Very happy! *[Exit following.]*

SCENE changes to the House of Mr. Silky.

Mr. Silky and Jacob.

Silky. Mr. Goldfinch not called yet, Jacob?

Jacob. No, Sir.

Silky. Nor any message from the widow?

Jacob. No, Sir. *(Knocking heard.)*

Silky. See who knocks, Jacob! *(Exit Jacob.)* I dare say it is one or t'other! They must come to me at last!

Enter Harry Dornton in wild haste, following Jacob.

Harry. (Entering) Are you sure he is at home?

Jacob. He is here, Sir. *[Exit.]*

Harry. Mr. Silky—! *(Panting.)*

Silky. Ah! My dear Mr. Dornton, how do you do?—I hope you are very well! I am exceedingly glad to see you! This call is so kind, so condescending! It gives me infinite pleasure!

Harry. Mr. Silky, you must instantly grant me a favour!

Silky. A favour! What is it? How can I serve you? I would run to the world's end.

Harry. You must exert your whole friendship!

Silky. Friendship, Sir? Say duty! 'Twas you that made a man of me! I should have been ruined, in the Bench, I know not where or what, had you not come forward and supported me at the critical moment! And now I can defy the world!

Harry. (Impatiently) Hear me! I know you can.

Silky. Oh yes! The sum you lent me, a lucky speculation, five years of continual good fortune, and other little lifts have made me—! I won't say what—But, your father

father and perhaps another or two excepted, I say perhaps, I'll shew my head with the proudest of 'em.

Harry. Why then I am a fortunate man!

Silky. To be sure you are! How can I serve you? What can I do? Make me happy!

Harry. You can rescue me from phrensy!

Silky. Can I?—I am proud! Infinitely happy!—What? How? I am a lucky fellow! Tell me which way?—Where can I run? What can I do?

Harry. (*Dreading*) The request is serious—trying!

Silky. So much the better! So much the better! Whom would I serve, if not you?—You! The son of the first man in the city!

Harry. (*Wildly*) You mistake!

Silky. I don't! You are, you are! Dornton and Co. may challenge the world, the house of Hope perhaps excepted!

Harry. Woefully mistake!

Silky. Pooh!

Harry. Our house is in danger of stopping payment!

Silky. Sir?—Stop payment!

Harry. My follies are the cause!

Silky. Stop payment?

Harry. I have not been used to ask favours—but—

Silky. Stop payment!

Harry. Scorn me, curse me, spurn me, but save my father!

Silky. Stop payment?

Harry. What means this alteration in your countenance?

Silky. Oh dear, no! Ha, ha, ha! Not in the least! Ha, ha, ha, I assure you, I, I, I—

Harry. I have told you our situation. Yourself and two other friends must jointly support my father, by your credit, to the amount of fifty thousand pounds—Mark me!—Must!

Silky. Fifty thousand pounds, Mr. Dornton! Fifty thousand pounds! Are you dreaming? Me? Fifty thousand pounds! Me? Or half the sum? Or a fifth of the sum? Me!

Harry. Prevaricating scound—! Hear me, Sir!

Silky. (*In fear*) Yes, Sir!

Harry. I must be calm—(*Bursting out*) Are you not a—!

I say—Sir—You have yourself informed me of your ability, and I must insist, observe, Sir! I insist on your immediate performance of this act of duty!

Silky. Duty, and fifty thousand pounds! Are you mad, Mr. Dornton? Are you mad? Or do you think me mad?

Harry. I think you the basest of wretches!

Silky. Nay, Mr. Dornton, I would do any thing to serve you! Any thing, I protest to heaven!—Would go any where, run—

Harry. Of my errands, wipe my shoes! Any dirty menial office that cost you nothing—And this you call shewing your gratitude?

Silky. Is it not, Mr. Dornton?

Harry. (*His anger rising*) And will you give no help to the house?

Silky. Nay, Mr. Dornton—!

Harry. After the favours you have been for years receiving, the professions you have been daily making, and the wealth you have by these means been hourly acquiring! Will you not, Sir?

Silky. (*Retreating*) Nay, Mr. Dornton—!

Harry. Will you not, Sir?

Silky. Don't hurt a poor old man! I can't!

Harry. (*Seizing, shaking him, and throwing him from him*) Scoundrel! [*Exit.*

Silky. Bless my heart!—Stop payment?—The house of Dornton!—Fifty thousand pounds?—I declare I am all of a tremble! James! William!

Enter two Clerks.

Have we any bills on the house of Dornton?

First Clerk. I have just been examining the books, Sir. We have bills to the amount of—

Silky. How much? How much? A thousand pounds?

First Clerk. Three, Sir.

Silky. Three!—Three thousand?—Bless my heart!

First Clerk. We heard the news the very moment after young Mr. Dornton came in!

Silky. Run, pay the bills away!

First Clerk. Where, Sir?

Silky. Any where! Any body will take 'em! Run with them

them to my dear friend, Mr. Smallware; it is too far for him to have heard of the crash. Begone! Don't leave him! Give my very best respects to him! He will oblige me infinitely! Fly! (*Exit First Clerk.*) And go you, James, to the clearing house, and get it whispered among the clerks. Then, if there are any of Dornton's bills to be bought at fifty per cent. discount, let me know. I will buy up all I can—(*Exit Clerk*) It's a safe speculation: I know the house: there must be a good round dividend.

[*Exit.*]

ACT IV.

SCENE I. *The House of the Widow Warren.*

Enter Jenny followed by Harry Dornton, who with an oppressed Heart, but half drunk with Wine and Passion, assumes the appearance of wild and excessive Gaiety.

Harry.

AWAY, Handmaid of Hecate! Fly!

Jenny. Lord, Sir, you don't mean as you say!

Harry. Will you begone, Cerbera?—Invite my Goddesses to descend in a golden shower, and suddenly relieve these racking doubts.

Jenny. Goddesses!—I knew you meant Miss Sophy!

Harry. Prime tormentrix to the Furies, begone!

Jenny. What, Sir, to my old mistress?

Harry. Hear you?—Yes! I want an old mistress, with her old gold, instantly to relieve an injured old man—Tol de rol—Vanish, daughter of Nox! Tell her what a gay and love-sick humour I am in—Tol de rol.

Enter Widow; and Exit Jenny, dissatisfied.

Widow. (*Smiling*) Mr. Dornton!

Harry. Widow!—Here am I!—Phaeton the second hurled from my flaming car! I come burning with fierce

desires, devoutly bent on committing the deadly sin of matrimony! May these things be? Speak, my saving Angel!

Widow. Fie upon you! How can you throw one into such an insuperable trepidation of spirits?

Harry. Will you have me?—Pronounce but the blessed Yes, and I am thine for ever and for aye.

Widow. Dear Mr. Dornton—! You—I—

Harry. Ay, ay—I know very well—The formal No, the crimson blush, the half-consenting side-glance, the hesitating Yes, the palpitation violent—We'll suppose them all—There, there!—I have acted them over, and the parson's tragical farce is going to begin!

Widow. Nay, but—! Dear Mr. Dornton—!

Harry. Do not imagine, amiable widow, that I am mad!—No, no, no!—(*With a hysteric laugh*) Only a little flighty—Left my father furiously, drank three bottles of Burgundy frantically, flew in amorous phrensy to the attack, and will carry the place or die on the spot!—Powder and poison await my choice; and let me tell you, sweet widow, I am a man of my word. So you'll have me, won't you?

Widow. Oh, Mr. Dornton—!

Harry. Why you would not see my father perish! Would you? And me expire! Would you?

Widow. Am I so very cruel?

Harry. Then say Yes!—Yes, or—Pistols—Daggers—Cannon balls!

Widow. Yes, Sir, yes, yes!

Harry. Hold, fair widow! Kind widow, hold! Be not rash!—I am the veriest villain!—Avoid me!—A ruined!—But that were indeed a trifle—My father! Him! Him have I ruined! Heard you that? Bring forth your hoards! Let him once more be himself, and bid me kiss the dust!

Widow. (*Aside*) Elegant youth! (*Aloud*) Ah you flatterer! I own you have been a little—wild, but—

Harry. A little! Oh! Ha, ha, ha! Widow, I am a sad fellow!—A damned sad dog!—I tell you I have ruined my father—A prince of fathers! Who, had I not been a rascal, would have given me his soul! And I have ruined him!—Ruined him!—Beware of me!—Fly me!—Yet should you?—Rise Imps of night! Deep have I sworn to find

find some means to save a father from destruction, and I will keep my oath, though—!

Widow. Oh fie! How can you terrify one so?

Harry. And wilt thou, widow, be his support? (*Eagerly*) Wilt thou?

Widow. Cruel question! How can I deny?

Harry. Immortal blessings be upon thee! My father!

Widow. Will be all rapture to hear—!

Harry. Will he?—Words of comfort!—Will he?—A buxom, fair, and bounteous dame, whose treasures can restore his tottering fortunes to their wonted splendour! Ha! Will he? Will he?

Widow. Certainly, Mr. Dornton, he cannot be displeased at such a choice.

Harry. (*Shakes his head*) Ah, ha, ha, ha! (*Sighs*) You don't know my father! A strange, affectionate—! That loves me—! Oh! He—! And you see how I use him! You see how I use him! But no matter—Tol de rol—We'll be married to-night.

Widow. Oh fie!

Harry. Ay, my Madona! To-night's the day—The sooner the better—"Tis to rescue a father, blithsome widow! A father! To save him have I fallen in love—Remember—Sin with open eyes, widow—Money—I must have money— Early in the morn, ere counters echo with the ring of gold, fifty thousand must be raised.

Widow. It shall, Mr. Dornton.

Harry. Why, shall it? Shall it? Speak again, beautiful vision, speak! Shall it?

Widow. Dear Mr. Dornton, it shall.

Harry. Tol de rol—He shall live! He shall smile! Again his heart shall feel joy!—Oh my bland and bonny widow! (*Partly singing*) My widow fair and debonair—Keep thy word—Let but my father be himself, and I am thine! Body and soul thine!

Widow. And are you really—? Oh, no!—No—(*Coquettishly*) You are not in love?

Harry. Fathom and half, poor Tom!

And we'll love by day, and we'll live by night—

[*Singing and sighing.*]

With a hey and a ho and a heigho, widow!

I have drunk Burgundy—To your health, auspicious Amazon!—Burgundy!

For I wanted the grace
Of a bold villain's face,
To prevail, with heigho,
On a buxom widow.

[Sings.

[Kisses her.

Widow. (Coquetting) Fie! I shall hate you, if you are so fond of me! I shall indeed!—But no—You are man!—Roving, faithless man!

Harry. No, no! Fear not! Thou gracious widow, art my overflowing cup of consolation—What! A father saved—?—Remember!—Fifty thousand the first thing in the morning?

Widow. And would not a part this evening!

[Still coquetting.

Harry. (Suddenly) What sayest thou?—Oh, no!—Whoo!—Thousands—

Widow. No: you are a naughty bad man, and I don't like you: I don't indeed—Else I have a trifling sum.

Harry. (Eagerly) How much?

Widow. Six thousand—

Harry. Six?

Widow. Which I meant to have disposed of, but—

Harry. No, no! I'll dispose of it, dear widow!

(Kisses her) I'll dispose of it in a twinkling! (Elated) Thou art my Goddess! (Kisses her again) By the faith of my body but I will thank thee—Yea thee will love exceedingly!

Widow. Oh fie!—No, you won't!—Will you?

[Languishingly.

Harry. Will I? (Sighs) Shall I not be in duty bound?

Widow. No!—You can't love me. [More fondly.

Harry. Ha, ha, ha! My fair Pelican of Potosi! Queen of Pactolus! Doubt not my gratitude—Let this and this—

[Kissing.

Widow. Fie! You are a sad man—But I'll bring you a draft!

Harry. Do, my blooming widow! Empress of the golden isles, do!

Widow. I tell you, you are a very bad man!—But, remember, this trifle is for your own use,

Harry. No my pearl unparalleled! My father's! My father's! My pocket is an insidious gulf, into which I never more will guineas cast. Save but my father, and I will kiss the ground on which thou treadest, and live and breathe but on thy bounty! (*Self indignation.*) [*Exit Widow.*

At least till time and fate shall means afford
Somewhat to perform, worthy of man and me.

Enter Jenny, peeping.

Jenny. St!

Harry. Ah, ha! My merry maid of May!

Jenny. I suppose you are waiting to see miss Sophy, now you have got rid of the old lady?

Harry. Got rid of the old lady?—Thou brazen pin-placer! Thou virgin of nine-and-twenty years occupation! No. I have not got rid of the old lady!—The old lady is to be my blooming, youthful bride!—And I, happy youth, am written and destined in the records of eternity her other half!—Before the stars were this marriage was decreed!—Heigho!

Jenny. Lord, sir, what rapturation!—But stay a little, and I'll tell miss Sophy her mamma wants her, here; so then—Hush!—[*Jenny retires, making a sign, and*

Re-enter the Widow Warren.

Widow. An't you a sad man?—Here's the draft.

Harry. Thanks, my Sultana!—Thou shalt find me very grateful—Thou hast bought and paid for me, and I am thine!—By fair and honest traffic thine!—This halcyon night the priest, pronouncing conjurations dire—

Widow. Fie! I won't look at you!

Harry. Ay, to-night we'll marry; shall we not?

Widow. I'll not answer you a word! (*Enter Sophia skippingly, but stops short*) You are a dangerous man!—(*Sitting down and coquetting*) How dare you talk to me of to-night?

Harry. To-night shall be a night of wonder! And we'll love like—(*Aside*) like Darby and Joan!

Widow. (*Languishingly*) I shall hate you intolerably!

[*Sophia advancing on tip-toe.*

Harry. Hey for the parson's permission! Hail, my sublime widow!

Widow. To steel thus upon one at an unguarded moment—!

Harry. But here first let me kneel, and thus to Ceres pay—[*Going to kiss her hand in rapture, meets the eye of Sophia.*

Widow. I'll never forgive you!—I hate you now worse than ever.

Sophia. (*Coming between them with bursting trepidation, taking the valentine from her bosom and presenting it*) There, fir!

Widow. Ah!

Sophia. There, fir!—Oh pray, fir, take it, fir!

Widow. Why, minikin—!

Sophia. I request, fir!—I desire, fir!

Harry. (*Declining it*) Tol de rol—

Sophia. (*Tearing the paper piecemeal, and throwing it spitefully away*) Why then there, fir—and there, fir—and there, there, there, there, fir!

Widow. Poor minikin! I declare, she is jealous!

Sophia. (*Her sobs rising*) And I'll—I'll—Wri-i-i-ite to my—to my grandma-a-a-a directly—

Widow. Fie, child!

Sophia. And I'll go do-o-o-own—into Glo-o-o-oster-shire—

Widow. Go up to your chamber, child!

Sophia. And I'll tell my grandma-a what a false, base, bad man you are; and she shall ha-ate you, and despise you; and I'll ha-a-ate you, and despise you myself!

Widow. Poor thing!

Sophia. And moreover I'll hate and despise all mankind! And for your sake (*With great energy.*) I'll live and die a maid!

Widow. Yes, child, that I dare be sworn you will!

Harry. Widow! I am a sad fellow! Don't have me—I am a vile fellow! Sophy! you are right to despise me? I am going to marry your mother!

Sophia. I'll go down into Glo-o-oster-shire—I wo-on't live in such a false-hearted city! And you ought to be ashamed of yourself, ma', to make yourself so ridiculous!

Harry. No, no, sweet Sylph, it is my fault! all my fault!

Widow. (*Enraged*) Be gone, Miss!

Harry. (*Interposing*) Sweet widow, Gentle widow!—
I've

I've sold myself, Sophy! Six thousand pounds is the earnest money paid down, for the reptile Harry Dornton!—I love you, Sophy!

Widow. How, Mr. Dornton?

Harry. I do, by Heaven! Take back your money, widow! (*Offering the draft*) I'm a sad scoundrel!

Sophia. You are a base faithless man, you know you are! And you are a pitiless woman, a merciless woman, for all you are my own mother, to let my poor brother Milford go to be starved to death in a dark dungeon!

Harry. Milford in prison?

Sophia. Yes, Sir; arrested by your cruel, old, ugly father! I'm sure he is ugly! Though I never saw him in my life, I'm sure he is an ugly, hideous, ugly monster! [*Exit.*

Harry. Is this true, widow?

Widow. (*Stammering*) Sir—

Harry. (*Agitated.*) Arrested by my father?—Squandering her money on a ruined reprobate, and won't release her husband's son?

Widow. Nay but, dear Mr. Dornton!

Harry. I'll be with you again presently, widow; presently, presently. [*Exit.*

Widow. (*Speaking after him*) To-night, you know, Mr. Dornton—?

Enter Jenny.

Jenny. Mr. Goldfinch is coming up, ma'am.

Widow. I have no time to waste with Mr. Goldfinch. I'll presently send him about his business. Mr. Dornton talks I don't know how, Jenny—Says it must be to-night.

Enter Goldfinch.

Goldfinch. Well, widow?

Widow. Not so free, Sir! (*Walks up the stage disdainfully.*)

Jenny. (*Aside to Goldfinch*) Have you got the licence

Goldfinch. No.

Jenny. No!

Goldfinch. No—Been to Tatterfall's.

Jenny. And not for the licence?

Goldfinch. Tellee I've been to Tatterfall's!

Jenny. Ah! It's all over!

Goldfinch.

Goldfinch. Made sure of the Eclipse colts!—
Must not lose 'em!

Jenny. (*Aside*) Stupid booby!

Widow. (*Advancing*) What is your present business, Sir?

Goldfinch. My business? Ha, ha, ha! That's a good one! I'll tell you my business—(*Approaching with open arm.*)

Widow. (*Haughtily*) Keep your distance, Sir!

Goldfinch. Distance, widow? No; that's not the way. I should be double distanced if I did.

Widow. Were you indeed a man of deportment and breeding—!

Goldfinch. Breeding?—Look at my spurs!

Widow. Had you the manner, the spirit, the—But no—You are no gentleman—

Goldfinch. Whew! No gentleman? (*Claps on his hat and takes a lounging impudent swagger*) Damme that's a good one!—Charles Goldfinch no gentleman?—Ask in the box-lobby! Enquire at the school! (*In a boxing attitude.*)

Widow. Sir, you are a tedious person: your company is troublesome!

Goldfinch. Turf or turnpike, keep the best of cattle—Walk, trot or gallop—Run, amble or canter—Laugh at every thing on the road—Give 'em all the go by—Beat the trotting butcher!—Gentleman?—That's your fort!

Jenny. (*Aside to Goldfinch.*) Follow me. [*Exit.*]

Widow. I beg, Sir, I may not be intruded upon, by you or your horse-jackey jargon any more. [*Exit.*]

Goldfinch. Here's a kick up. What's all this? Must have her, or smash! Smirker (*Pointing after Jenny*) will tell me what it means—Smart thing for a light weight. Spirit, shape, and form—Carry a fine neck in a running martingale—Shews blood—Win all the give and takes—Take her into training—Match her the Abingdon mile against all England—That's your fort! [*Exit.*]

SCENE changes to an Apartment at the House of a Sheriff's Officer.

Enter Harry Dornton in the same hurry and Officer.

Harry. Dispatch, man! Dispatch! Tell Jack Milford I can't wait a moment!—Hold—Write an acquittal instantly

stantly for the thousand pounds. But say not a word to him of my intention!

Officer. A thousand, Sir? It is almost five thousand!

Harry. Impossible!

Officer. There are detainers already lodged to that amount.

Harry. Five thousand?

Officer. Must I write the acquittal for the sum total?

Harry. No—Yes, write it however. Have it ready. Early to-morrow morning it shall all be paid.

Officer. In the mean time there may be more detainers.

Harry. Damnation! What shall I do?—Run, send him!—And, do you hear, a bottle of Champaign and two rummers!—Rummers! Mind!—Not a word to him!—*(Exit Officer)* Five thousand?—And more detainers.

Enter Waiter with Bottle and Glasses, and Milford following.

Milford. Mr. Dornton!

Harry. How now, Jack! What's your wonder? I can't stay a moment with you, but I could not pass without giving you a call. Your hand, my boy! Cheer up!

Milford. Excuse me, Sir!

Harry. Why, Jack!—Pshaw! Cast away this gloom and be—Honest Jack Milford! You are now in tribulation; what of that? Why, man, the blessed sun himself is sometimes under a cloud! Wait but till to-morrow—Where is the wine?—*(Fills the rummers)* Come, drink, and wash away grief! 'Sblood, never look frosty and askance, man, but drink, drink, drink!

Milford. *(Abruptly)* Sir? I am not disposed to drink!

Harry. Why what a tabernacle phrase is that! Here's confusion to all sorrow and thinking!—I could a tale unfold—! But I won't afflict you—I must fly—Yet I can do no good to-night—Hurrah, Jack! Keep up your spirits! Be determined, like me!—I am the vilest of animals that crawl the earth—Yet I won't flag!—I'll die a bold-faced villain!—I have sold myself—Am disinterested—Have lost—Ah, Sophia!—Hurrah, Jack!—Keep it up!—Round let the great globe whirl; and whirl it will, though I should happen to slide from its surface into infinite nothingness—Drink, my noble soul!

Milford. Your mirth is impertinent, Sir!

Harry

Harry. So it is, Jack—Damned impertinent! But ruin is around us, and it is high time to be merry!

Milford. Sir? I must inform you that, though I have been betrayed by you and imprisoned by your father, I will not be insulted!

Harry. Betrayed by me?

Milford. Ay, Sir! I have had full information of your mean arts! It was necessary I should be out of the way, that your designs on Mrs. Warren might meet no interruption!

Harry. Pshaw!—Good day, Jack, good day!

Milford. And pray, Sir, inform your father I despise his meanness, and spurn at his malice!

Harry. (*Suddenly returning and darting towards him, but stopping short*) Jack Milford!—Utter no blasphemy against my father!—I am half mad!—I came your friend—

Milford. I despise your friendship!

Harry. That as you please—Think all that is vile of me—I defy you to exceed the truth—But utter not a word against my father!

Milford. Deliberately, pitifully malignant!—Not satisfied with the little vengeance he himself could take, he has sent round to all my creditors!

Harry. 'Tis false!

Milford. False?

Harry. A vile, eternal falsehood!

Enter Officer with Papers and Writs.

Officer. Gentlemen!—Did you call?

Harry. (*Interrupting him*) Leave the room, Sir!

Officer. But—!

Harry. We are busy, Sir!

Officer. I thought—!

Harry. I tell you we are busy, and must not be interrupted! (*Exit Officer*) (*Pause of consideration*) Mr. Milford, you shall hear from me immediately. [*Exit Harry.*

Milford. (*After ruminating*) What were those papers? Surely I have not been rash?—Nobody but his father could have brought my creditors thus on me all at once?—He seemed half drunk or half frantic!—Said he was ruined, disinherited—Talked something of to-morrow—What could

could the purport of his coming be? (*Enter Officer*) Well, Sir?

Officer. Here is a note, Sir.

Milford. From whom?

Officer. The young gentleman.

Milford. (*Reads aside*) 'I understand you are at liberty'—How! At liberty? (*The Officer bows*) (*Reads*) 'I shall walk up to Hyde Park: you will find me at the Ring at six—Exactly at six'—At liberty?

Officer. Your debts are all discharged.

Milford. Impossible!—Which way?—By whom?

Officer. Why, Sir—That is—

Milford. No hesitation, but tell me by whom?

Officer. Sir—I thought I perceived some anger between you and the young gentleman?

Milford. Ask no questions, Sir; make no delays! Tell me who has paid my debts?—Tell me the truth—Consequences you do not suspect depend upon your answer!

Officer. I perceive, Sir, there has been some warmth between you: and though the young gentleman made me promise silence and secrecy—

Milford. (*Astonishment*) What then it was Mr. Dornton?—(*Officer bows*) Madman! What have I done! [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE changes to the House of Dornton.

Enter Harry Dornton, followed by Mr. Smith.

Harry. And the danger not yet past?

Mr. Smith. Far from it! Mr. Sulky has twice brought us supplies, and is gone a third time.

Harry. Brave spirit! He would coin his heart!—My father supports it nobly?

Mr. Smith. He is anxious only for you.

Harry. Well, well! Ha, ha, ha! Tol lol—I'll bring him relief—Comfort him, assure him of it!—Ay, hear me heaven, and—! To-night it is too late, but to-morrow all shall be well!—Excellent well!

Mr. Smith. (*Significantly*) You will marry the widow?

Harry. Have you heard?—Ay, boy, ay!—We'll marry!—I will go and prepare her,—Early in the morning, that all may be safe.

Mr. Smith. Will that be right?

Harry.

Harry. I have told her the truth. She knows all: knows what a vile infernal—I tell you she knows me! No novice she, Old True blue! *Tol de rol!*—Console my father! Cheer him! Enlighten his soul with hope! I'll keep my word! What! Am I not his own son?—Why, ay—(*Looking at his watch*) The proctor's, the lawyer's, the widow's, and (*Starts*) at six?—(*Aside*) The Ring?—The Ring at six?—Friends!—Who can say what may happen?—What, leave my father to perish?—I'll not go! Though all hell should brand me for a coward, I'll not go!—Mr. Smith, take care of my father!—Mark me, I recommend my father to you! [*Exit.*]

Enter Mr. Dornton.

Dornton. Where is Harry?—Did not I hear his voice?

Mr. Smith. He is this moment gone, Sir.

Dornton. Gone where?

Mr. Smith. Do you not suspect where, Sir?

Dornton. (*Alarmed*) Suspect!—What?—Speak!

Mr. Smith. To the widow Warren's.

Dornton. For what purpose?

Mr. Smith. To marry her.

Dornton. Marry!—The widow Warren!

Mr. Smith. And save the house by her fortune.

Dornton. Generous Harry! Noble affectionate boy! I'd perish first!

Mr. Smith. He seems very resolute—He has already had six thousand pounds of her.

Dornton. Marry her? I shall go mad!—Where is Mr. Sulky?

Mr. Smith. He is just returned. I hear him in the compting-house.

Dornton. Tell him I wish to speak with him. (*Exit Mr. Smith.*) Harry Dornton and the widow Warren?—I shall die in Bedlam! (*Enter Mr. Sulky*) Are we safe, Mr. Sulky?

Sulky. For to-day, perhaps.

Dornton. What bank have we to begin to-morrow?

Sulky. I can't tell—I fear not thirty thousand.

Dornton. Mr. Sulky, you—you—have this day shewn yourself an active partner, and a sincere friend.

Sulky. Humph.

Dornton.

Dornton. I have long esteemed you ; I esteem you more and more.

Sulky. Humph.

Dornton. My son Harry—(*Hesitating*) You are a very good man, Mr. Sulky ; a compassionate man, though you don't look so.

Sulky. Humph.

Dornton. 'Tis pity to see so noble a youth—I am sure you would not wish him any harm, Mr. Sulky ? I am sure you would not!

Sulky. Whom ?

Dornton. Harry Dornton. Would you?—Would you?—Would you, Mr. Sulky?

Sulky. A kind question.

Dornton. Nay, I did not mean to be unkind, Mr. Sulky ; you know I did not—Shall we not venture one step more to save him ?

Sulky. Save ? Impossible ! Ruin only can reform him ; total ruin.

Dornton. You mistake, Mr. Sulky. His own misfortunes little affected him, but mine—! He is struck to the heart!—I know him!

Sulky. So do I.

Dornton. Struck to the heart!—I'm sure on't! He'll be a good man!—A great man!

Sulky. Humph.

Dornton. You know the widow Warren, Mr. Sulky ?

Sulky. Don't you ?

Dornton. I never saw her in my life—I hear she is full forty, her manners absurd, her character cruel, and her morals——

Sulky. Bad enough.

Dornton. Six thousand pounds at this moment is a great sum ! I own it ! But do you think I ought not to venture ?

Sulky. Venture what ?

Dornton. To—To take it from our bank ?

Sulky. For what ?

Dornton. For—For the—the relief of Harry Dornton ?

Sulky. What you please ! Take all ! What is it to me ?

Dornton. Nay, but, Mr. Sulky, you surely don't see the thing in the right light ?

Sulky. I can starve, like the rest !

Dornton.

Dornton. (*Snappish haste*) Very well, Mr. Sulky! Very well! I perceive you can be interested, and—and—!

Sulky. And what?

Dornton. Very well, Mr. Sulky! Very well!

Sulky. I can stare bankruptcy in the face as steadfastly as you can.

Dornton. Ay, ay! No doubt! The world is all alike! I am an old fool, and so shall live and die!

Sulky. Why do you ask my advice? Take the money! Empty the coffers! Pour it all into his hat! Give him guineas to play at chuck farthing, and bank bills to curl his hair!

Dornton. Very well, Mr. Sulky!—Friendship, generosity, a sense of justice? Oh! It's all a farce!

Sulky. Humph.

Dornton. (*Rings*) Very well, Sir! Very well! (*Enter Servant*) Is the carriage ready?

Servant. It's at the door, Sir. [*Exit.*

Dornton. (*Going, turns back*) So, Mr. Sulky, you could see him married to this widow, to whom you have so often as well as now given the worst of characters, rather than incur a little more risk for your friend?

Sulky. Marry?

Dornton. Yes, marry!

Sulky. Whom?

Dornton. The widow Warren, I tell you!

Sulky. Harry Dornton?

Dornton. Yes, Harry Dornton!

Sulky. When? Where?

Dornton. Immediately! With unexampled affection, to save me who am old and worthless, he would devote his youth, his great qualities, and his noble heart, to all the torments which such a marriage and such a woman can inflict!

Sulky. Take the money!

Dornton. Are you serious, Mr. Sulky?

Sulky. Take the money! Away! Begone! I would indeed starve, inchmeal, rather than he should marry her!

Dornton. Mr. Sulky, you are a worthy man, a true friend!

Sulky. Curse compliments! Make haste! [*Exeunt.*

ACT V.

SCENE, *the Widow Warren's.**Sophia and Jenny meeting.*

Jenny.

SO, Miss! Here's your mamma just coming down.*Sophia. (Much agitated)* Is she dressed?*Jenny.* Oh yes!—I have decorationed her out like any king's coach-horse!*Sophia.* It's very well.*Jenny.* With her ribbands and ringlets stuck about and dangle-ating down her back and all here—*Sophia.* It's very well.*Jenny.* Tight laced—Thomas called up to help.—*Sophia.* It's all very well!—But it will be no wedding—*Jenny. (Aside)* I hope not.*Sophia.* He told her to her face that he loved me, and offered to give her the money back—He'll never have her—And if he does I don't care—I know I shall die broken-hearted, but I don't care—I'll tell all to my dear grandma', for I'll not stay in this wicked city—No! He shan't see me pine away—I know my ghost will haunt him; but I can't help it. I never wished him any harm, and had he but been true-hearted and have waited for me, I would—But it's no matter—He shan't see a tear that I shed, nor hear the least sigh that I heave.*Enter the Widow Warren.**Jenny. (Looking, admiring, and walking round her)* Well, ma'am—! I declare you're a *pietur*!*Widow.* Do you think I look tolerably, Jenny? (*Walking and surveying herself*)—Shall I do execution? What is the matter, child?*Sophia.* Mark my words, he'll never have you!*Widow.* Poor thing!*Sophia.*

Sophia. He never will!

[*Knocking heard at the street-door.*

Widow. Run, Jenny, see who it is! (*Exit Jenny*) Go up to your chamber, child.

Sophia. No! I will stay here.

Widow. Begone to your chamber, I say, Miss!

Sophia. Beat me if you please, kill me, but I will not!

Re-enter Jenny.

Jenny. Here's an elderly gentleman, ma'am, asks to speak to you.

Widow. Will you begone, Miss?

Sophia. Since it is not he, I don't want to stay. I only want to look him in the face once more. [*Exit.*

Widow. How is he dressed?

Jenny. In grey, ma'am.

Widow. In grey!

[*Considering.*

Jenny. Yes, ma'am.

Widow. In dark grey?

[*Hoping.*

Jenny. Yes, ma'am.

Widow. (*Earnestly*) Does he look like a parson, Jenny?

Jenny. Why, ma'am, he is a soberly, smug, jobation-looking man enough.

Widow. Let him be shewn in—I dare say it is the Divine!

Footman introduces Mr. Dornton.

Dornton. Your humble servant, Madam.

Widow. Sir, your very most humble servant.

[*With great respect.*

Dornton. I presume you are unacquainted with me?

Widow. (*Simpering*) I believe I can penetrate, sir—

Dornton. Can you, Madam?

Widow. (*With her fan before her face*) You—You come on the—part of—young Mr. Dornton?

Dornton. (*Surprised*) I do!

Widow. (*Aside*) It is the parson!—Would you be so indulgent as to be seated, Sir?

Dornton. Excuse me, Madam.

Widow. Would you be pleased to take any refreshment, Sir?

Dornton. Madam!—None, I thank you.

Widow.

Widow. A morsel of feed-cake, a French biscuit, a bit of orange loaf, a glass of Constantia, or a jelly?—I know these little cordial comforts are agreeable consolations to gentlemen of your cloth.

Dornton. (*Surveying himself*) Cloth!

Widow. No offence, I hope? I participate in them myself.

Dornton. Hem! No doubt!

Widow. You are acquainted with Mr. Dornton?

Dornton. Why—Yes—I am I believe one of his oldest acquaintance.

Widow. Then I dare say you have a great regard for him?

Dornton. Hem!—Yes—I—had a—sort of a friendship for him even before he was born.

Widow. Sir!—Oh!—You are intimate with the family?

Dornton. Yes—yes, Madam!

Widow. And know his father?

Dornton. Um—(*Shrugs*) Why—Though I have kept him company from the day of his birth to this very hour, they tell me I don't know him yet!

Widow. Ay indeed! Is he so odd?

Dornton. Sometimes—To my great regret, I have sometimes found him a very absurd old gentleman!

Widow. I am sorry for it!—Because as I am soon to become—hymeneally—his intimate—relation—I—I—!

[*Maidenly affectation.*

Dornton. You would wish for a sensible indulgent—Papa—

[*Smiles.*

Widow. It's natural, Sir.

[*Simpering.*

Dornton. Ha! I dare not say too much in his favour.

Widow. Nay though I have a vast—hum—ha—regard for young Mr. Dornton—I own I have no great predilection of opinion for the father! [*Nodding very significantly.*

Dornton. (*Suddenly*) Nor he for you, Madam!

Widow. Do you think so?

Dornton. I am sure so!

Widow. I warrant, Sir, he is, as you say, a very precise acrimonious person!—A tetchy repugnant kind of old scarecrow!

Dornton. I said no such thing, Madam!

Widow.

Widow. Ah! A little caution, Sir, to be sure, becomes gentlemen of your cloth.

Dornton. Cloth again!—I don't know what you mean by my cloth; but Mr. Dornton, Madam, is little older than yourself: nor does he think himself half so repugnant.

Widow. Sir!

Dornton. (*Recollecting himself*) Madam!—I—I beg your pardon!—I— [Bowing.

Widow. (*Knocking heard*) Oh! Here I dare say comes the bridegroom! [Enraptured: crosses to the door.

Dornton. (*Aside*) My curst vivacity! I can never tell her after this who I am. [Walks up the stage.

Enter Harry Dornton, in haste.

Widow. Oh you rover!

Harry. Well, my kind widow! (*Mr. Dornton turns quick round at hearing his son's voice, and gradually approaches*) My loving compassionate widow! I am come post haste to cast myself once more on your bounty!

Widow. Hu-sh!

Harry. To intreat instant commiseration, and aid!

Widow. Hem! Hem! [Aloud.

Harry. I have not a minute to spare!

Widow. (*Whisper*) He's here! He's come! A waspish, tetchy—! Hem!— (*Aloud*) Your friend has been here some time, Mr. Dornton!

Harry. My friend! What friend?

Widow. Your friend the clergyman.

[Pointing to Mr. Dornton.

Harry. Clergyman!—You—(*Turning, sees his father at his elbow*)—My father!

Widow. His father! [Pause.

Dornton. Well, Harry, why do you look so blank? I am glad you are here—Your coming, and the mutual sincerity with which this lady and I have just spoken our sentiments, will save all circumlocution—At present we understand each other.

Widow. Sir—I—

Dornton. Oh, Madam, never retract—Let us continue the like plain honest dealing—

Widow. But—Sir—Mr. Dornton's affection—

Dornton. Ha, ha, ha!—Affection, Madam!—
[*Pitying her delusion.*]

Harry. Sir—

Dornton. Harry!—I know your motives! Will never forget them! But the cause of them has ceased.

Harry. Sir?—Beware! No false compassion! Remember not the vile reprobate that was your son! I spurn at existence that is coupled with your misery!

Dornton. Harry! Our danger is over,

Harry. Are you—? Are you serious?

Dornton. Mr. Sulky is a worthy man! His rich uncle is dead, and has left him sole heir. Our books too have been examined, and exceed our best hopes.

Harry. Tol de rol—!

Dornton. Here is your money, Madam.

Harry. My father saved—? Tol de rol—!

Widow. Nay but—Mr. Dornton!—Sir!—

[*Ready to cry.*]

Dornton. I must beg you will take it—

Harry. Rejoice, widow! Rejoice! Sing, shout! Tol de rol!

Widow. I do not want the money, Sir! Filthy money—
(*Whimpering restrained*) And as to what I said, though you have arrested Mr. Milford—

Harry. Ha! [*Starts, considers, and looks at his watch.*]

Widow. I am sorry—I beg your pardon—And if Mr. Dornton—

Dornton. Why don't you speak, Harry? Where are you going? (*Harry Dornton crosses hastily to the door*) Come back, Harry!—Stay, I say!

Harry. I cannot stay!—I must fly!—My honour is at stake! [*Exit.*]

Dornton. (*Alarmed*) His honour!—His honour at stake!—Here, here, Madam!—(*Offering her Bank bills.*)

Widow. Nay, Sir—

Dornton. 'Sdeath, Madam, take your money. [*Exit.*]

Widow. Cruel—usage!—Faithless—men—Blind—Stupid! I'll forsake and forswear the whole sex!

Enter Jenny with glee on tip-toe, as if she had been on the watch.

Jenny. Ma'am!

E

Widow.

Widow. (*Sobbing*) Savage race!

Jenny. Ma'am! Ma'am! Mr. Goldfinch, Ma'am!

Widow. Hay! Mr. Goldfinch?—Was that what you said, Jenny? (*Brightens up*) Where?

Jenny. Below, Ma'am. I persuaded him to come up, but he is quite surly.

Widow. Oh! He is coming? Well! I think I will see him—Yes—I think I will.

Jenny. I always told you, Ma'am, Mr. Goldfinch for me.

Widow. Did you?

Jenny. But he says he will have your written promise this very night, or never speak to you more—I hear him. (*Adjusting the Widow's dress*) Law, Ma'am, you had better give a few touches—Hereabout! Your eyes will have double the spirit and fire.

Widow. Will they? [Exit.

Enter Goldfinch.

Goldfinch. Where's the Dowager:

Jenny. Hush! Mind what I said to you—It is too late now for a licence, so be sure get the promise—Don't flinch!

Goldfinch. Me flinch? Game to the back-bone!

Jenny. Hush!

Re-enter the Widow Warren.

Goldfinch. Here I am once more, widow.

Widow. Ah, rambler!

Goldfinch. Are you cured of the tantarums?

Widow. Nay, Mr. Goldfinch—!

Goldfinch. Must I keep my distance!

Widow. Unkind!

Goldfinch. Am I a gentleman now?

Widow. Killing!

Goldfinch. Look you, widow, I know your tricks—Skittish! Won't answer the whip! Run out of the course! Take the rest!—So give me your promise:

Widow. My promise—!

Goldfinch. Signed and sealed.

Widow. Naughty man—You shan't—I won't let you tyrannize over a palpitating heart!

Goldfinch.

Goldfinch. Palpi— (*To Jenny*) What does she say?

Widow. You shan't steal on hymeneal transports!

Goldfinch. What's that?

Widow. Connubial ecstasies!

Goldfinch. Nu-What?

Widow. Go, intruder!

Goldfinch. Oh! What you won't?

Widow. I'll never forgive you.

Goldfinch. I'm off.

Widow. Cruel man!

Goldfinch. I'm off.

Widow. Mr. Goldfinch! (*Calling*)

Goldfinch. I'm off—

Widow. You shall have the promise!

Goldfinch. Oh, ho! Why then, I pull up—

Widow. Barbarous youth! Could you leave me?—But I must send to Mr. Silky.

Goldfinch. No, no! Let me have the promise directly! I'll go myself to Silky.

Widow. Will you, Mr. Goldfinch?

Goldfinch. Will I not?—Take a hack, mount the box—Hayait!—Scud away for the old scoundrel! I'm a deep one! Know the course every inch! I'm the lad for a widow! That's your fort!

Widow. Saucy man! I'll be very angry with you.

Goldfinch. Soon be back!

Widow. Adieu! Fly swiftly, ye minutes!

Goldfinch. But I must have the promise first!

Widow. I will go and write it—Come, dissembler, come!

[*Exit languishing.*]

Goldfinch. She's an old courser! But I knew I should take her at the double!

Enter Milford.

Milford. So, Charles, where's the widow?

Goldfinch. The widow's mine!

Milford. Yours?

Goldfinch. I'm the lad! All's concluded—Going post for old Silky. (*Offers to go at every speech, but is eagerly stopped by Milford.*)

Milford. Silky did you say?

E 2

Goldfinch.

Goldfinch. Am to pay the miserly rascal fifty thousand pounds down! But mum! That's a secret!

Milford. You are raving?

Goldfinch. Tellee he has her on the hip! She can't marry without his consent!

Milford. But why?

Goldfinch. Don't know. The close old rogue won't tell. Has got some deed, he says—Some writing.

Milford. Indeed!

Goldfinch. Yes—But it's all hush! I shall be a higher fellow than ever, Jack! Go to the second spring meeting—Take you with me—Come down a few to the Sweaters and Trainers—The knowing ones—The Lads—Get into the secret—Lay it on thick—Seven hundred to five Favourite against the field!—Done!—I'll do it again!—Done!—Five times over ditto repeated!—Done, done!—Off they go;—Winner lays by—Pretends to want foot—Odds rise high! Take 'em—Winner whispered lame—Lags after—Odds higher and higher!—Take 'em—Creeps up—Breathes 'em over the flat—Works 'em up hill—Passes the distance post—Still only second—Betting chair in an uproar!—Neck to neck!—Lets him out—Shews him the whip!—Shoots by like an arrow—Oh damme a hollow thing!—That's your sort! [Exit.

Milford. Fifty thousand to Silky for his consent because of some deed, some writing?—If it should be the will? It must!—By heaven it must! [Exit hastily.

SCENE changes to the Ring in Hyde Park.

Harry Dornton, looking at his Watch.

Harry. How long must I wait?—I see nothing of Milford—I'll cut off that bailiff's ears if he has betrayed me. [Walks about.

Enter Mr. Dornton, out of breath.

Dornton. So, Harry!

Harry. My father again?

Dornton. (Panting) What do you do here, Harry?

Harry. Sir—I—I want air.

Dornton. A pretty dance you have led me—What brought you hither?—(Sudden recollection) Where's the money you had

had of the widow? (*Pause: seeming to dread an answer*)
Where is the money, Harry?

Harry. (*Reluctantly*) Gone, Sir.

Dornton. Gone!

Harry. Most of it.

Dornton. And your creditors not paid? (*Another pause*)
And your creditors not paid?

Harry. No, Sir.

Dornton. (*Raises his hands*) I suspected—I foreboded this!—(*Harry Dornton walks up the stage*) He has been at some gaming-house, lost all, quarrelled, and come here to put a miserable end to a miserable existence! Oh, who would be a father! [*Extreme anguish.*

Enter Waiter.

Waiter. I am sent on an April-day kind of errand here. I think this is what they call the Ring. (*Looks round*) Hey! Who is this? (*Surveying Mr. Dornton*) Pray—Sir—Is your name Dornton?

Dornton. It is.

Waiter. Then I am right—Mr. Milford, Sir, has sent me with this note. [*Exit.*

Harry. (*Advancing*) It is for me, Sir!

Dornton. How do you know, Harry?

Harry. Sir, I am certain!—I must beg—!

Dornton. This is no time for ceremony! (*Reads*) ‘Dear Harry, forgive the provocation I have given you; forget the wrong I have done your father—’ Me!—‘I will submit to any disgrace rather than lift my hand against your life—I would have come and apologised even on my knees, but am prevented—J. Milford.’ (*Pause*)—Why, Harry!—What?—What is this?—Tell me—Tell me—Is it in paying Milford’s debts you have expended the money?

Harry. It is, Sir.

Dornton. (*After raising his clasped hands in rapture as if to return thanks, suddenly suppresses his feelings*) But how had he wronged me!—Why did you come here to fight him?

Harry. Sir—He—he spoke disrespectfully of you.

[*Pause.*

Dornton. (*With his eyes fixed on his son, till, unable any longer*

longer to contain himself, he covers them with one hand and stretches out the other) Harry!

Harry. (Taking his father's hand, but turning his back likewise to conceal his agitation) My father! [Pause.

Dornton. Harry! Harry! (Struggling affection) [Pause.

Harry. Dear Sir, let us fly to console poor Milford!

Dornton. What you will, Harry! Do with me what you will—Oh who would not be a father! [Exeunt.

SCENE changes to the House of the Widow Warren.

Enter Milford and Mr. Sulky.

Milford. The fool Goldfinch himself informed me, Sir, that Silky is to receive fifty thousand pounds for his consent!

Sulky. Fifty thousand! Zounds! Why then the old scoundrel must have got possession of the will.

Milford. Which is indubitably meant to be destroyed. Goldfinch is just returned with Silky. They are now with the widow, all in high glee, and are coming up here immediately, no doubt to settle the business in private.

Sulky. What can be done?

Milford. We must hide ourselves somewhere, and spring upon them.

Sulky. I hate hiding! It is deceit, and deceit is the resource of a rascal.

Milford. But there is no avoiding it! We cannot get legal assistance in time! Here are two closets! Do you go into one, and I'll shut myself up in the other. We shall hear what they are about, and can burst upon them at the proper moment.

Sulky. Well, if it must be so—But it's a vile, paltry refuge!

Milford. I hear them coming! Make haste!

[Exeunt Sulky and Milford into the closets.

Enter Silky, Widow, and Goldfinch.

Silky. Ha, ha, ha! I told you, Madam, I should hear from you when you wanted me! I knew it must come to that! But you are a lucky man, Mr. Goldfinch; and I'm a lucky man; ay, and you are a lucky woman too, Madam! We are all in luck!

Goldfinch.

Goldfinch. Ay damme, old one, you have been concerned in many a good thing in your time!

Silky. Ah, ha, ha, ha, ha! To be sure I have! I must provide for my family, Mr. Goldfinch.

Widow. It is indeed a fortunate event! Do you not participate my raptures, Mr. Goldfinch?

Goldfinch. To be sure—It's a deep scheme! It's knowing a thing or two! Hay, old one? Pigeoning the green-horns!

Silky. All so safe too, so snug! I am so pleased, and so happy! It's all our own! Not a soul will know of it but our three selves!

Goldfinch. Oh yes—One more, old one—

Silky. (*Alarmed*) Ay! Who? Who?

Goldfinch. Your father—Beelzebub!

Silky. Lord! Mr. Goldfinch, don't terrify me!

Widow. To be sure, it must be owned, you are a shocking old rogue, Mr. Silky! But there is no doing without you—So make haste with your deeds and your extortions; for really we should be very glad to be rid of your company—

Silky. Well, well, I'm ready—I'll not long interrupt your amorous haste. I am a man of business! I expected how it would be, and have a legal instrument here, ready drawn up by my own hand; which, when it is signed and sealed, will make all safe!

Widow. But where is the will?

Silky. Oh, I have it—First however let us be secure. (*Locks both the chamber doors: is going to read, but looks round, sees the closet doors, and with great anxiety and cunning locks them too.*)

Goldfinch. You're an old trader in sin! There's no being too deep for you!

Silky. Ah, ha, ha, ha! Do you think so, Mr. Goldfinch?

Goldfinch. But I should like to see you on your death-bed!

[*A blow from one of the closets.*]

Silky. Bless my soul!—What's that?

Goldfinch. Zounds!—Odd enough!—I believe he's coming for you before your time!

Widow. It was very strange!

Silky. I declare I am all of a tremble!

Widow. Come, come, let us get the shocking business over!—Where is the will?

Goldfinch. Don't shake so, man!

Silky. Well, well!—First sign the bond! (*Widow and Goldfinch going to sign, another knock heard*) Lord have mercy upon me!

Goldfinch. I smell sulphur!

Widow. Save me, Mr. Goldfinch!

Silky. The candles burn blue! [Pause]

Goldfinch. Pshaw! Zounds, it's only some cat in the closet!

Silky. I heard it in both the closets!

Goldfinch. Why, then there are two cats!—Come!—I'll sign— [Widow and Goldfinch sign the bond.]

Silky. Where's the promise?

Goldfinch. Here it is! [Laying it on the table.]

Silky. And here is the will, which, that all may be safe, we will immediately commit to the flames. (*Is going to burn it at the candle. Several loud knocks are heard from the doors. Silky starts, drops one candle, and overturns the other. The stage dark.*)

Silky. Lord have mercy upon us!

Goldfinch. My hair stands an end!

[Violent knocking at both closets and at the doors.]

Widow. Save me, Mr. Goldfinch! Protect me!

[Shrieks.]

(*Sulky and Milford burst open the closets and seize on the bond and promise: they then open the chamber doors, at one of which enter Jenny with lights, and at the other Sophia, Harry Dornton, and Mr. Dornton.*)

Sophia. Dear, ma', what's the matter?

Sulky. Where is the will? (*Silky recovers himself and snatches it up*) Give it me, you old scoundrel! Give it me this instant, or I'll throttle you! [Wrests it from him.]

Milford. So, gentlemen! You are a pretty pair of knaves!

Sulky. And you are a very worthy lady!

Widow. Don't talk to me, man!—Don't talk to me!—I shall never recover my senses again!

Harry. What has happened, gentlemen? How came you thus all locked up together?

Dornton. Are you here, Mr. Sulky?

Sulky.

Sulky. Yes! There's the honest, grateful, friendly Mr. Silky! Who would betray his friends, plunder the living, and defraud the dead, for the ease of his conscience, and to provide for his family!

Goldfinch. Old one! You're done up!

Sulky. And here is the girlish old coquette, who would rob her daughter and leave her husband's son to rot in a dungeon, that she might marry the first fool she could find!

Goldfinch. Widow! You are dished! (*Sulky examines the will*) Lost your last chance!

Dornton. A broken gamester, nurtured in idleness, ignorance, and dissipation, whose ridings, racings, and drivings are over, and whose whole train of horses, dogs, curricles, phaetons, and fooleries must come to the hammer immediately, is no great loss.

Sophia. Oh, la!

Dornton. I knew your father, Sir: 'tis happy for him that he is dead! If you will forsake these courses and apply to trade—

Goldfinch. Damn trade! Who's for the spring meeting? Coss 'em and wind 'em! Seven to five you don't name the winner! I'm for life and a curricule! A cut at the cafter, and the long odds! Damn trade! The four aces, a back hand, and a lucky nick! I'm a deep one! That's your fort! [Exit.

Sulky. And now, Madam—

Widow. Keep off, monster! You smell of malice, cruelty, and persecution!

Sulky. No, Madam: I smell of honesty! A drag you nauseate, but with which you must forcibly be dosed;—I have glanced over the will, and find I have the power.

Widow. Let me go, goblin!—You are a hideous person, and I hate the sight of you! Your breast is flint!—Flint! Unfeeling Gorgon, and I abominate you!

[Exit into an inner chamber.

Sophia. Nah, you are a kind, good, coss old soul; and I am sure you will forgive my poor ma'! We ought all to forget and forgive! Ought not we, Mr. Dornton?

Harry. (*With rapture, and looking to his father*) Do you hear her, Sir?

Dornton. Harry has told me of your innocent, pure, and

and unsuspecting heart—I love you for having called me an ugly monster!

Sophia. (To Harry) La, Mr. Dornton, how could you—!

Sulky. Harry—Give me your hand—You have a generous and a noble nature! But your generosity would have proved more pernicious than even your dissipation. No misfortunes, no not the beggary and ruin of a father, could justify so unprincipled a marriage!

Dornton. And now (To Mr. Sulky) my friend!

Milford. My father!

Harry. My—!

Sulky. Whoo! If you wish to get another word from me to-night, have done. (Turning to Silky) I hate fawning!

Silky. Ah, Mr. Sulky, you will have your humour.

Sulky. The indiscriminating generosity of this young man supported you in your day of distress; for which, serpent-like, you turned to sting your preserver.

Silky. Ah, you will have your humour.

Sulky. Yes; and it is my humour to see that your villainy shall be exposed in its true colours. Hypocrisy, falsehood, and fraud, are your familiars. To screen your avarice, you made it believed that this gentleman had been the cause of lodging the detainers, and had done the dirty work of which even you were ashamed. But the creditors shall receive their full demand.

Dornton. The proposal is just. Listen to that worthy man; and, if you can, be honest with a good grace. Every thing will then be readily adjusted, and I hope to the satisfaction of all parties. [Exeunt omnes.]

EPILOGUE.

EPILOGUE.

SPOKEN BY MRS. MATTOCKS.

*Mr scenic faults and follies laid aside,
 No widow now, nor disappointed bride,
 My own plain self I once again resume;
 Sent by the author here, to know his doom.
 Would you condemn him? Do, with all my heart.
 To own the truth, I don't half like my part:
 Through five long acts the butt of ridicule,
 A hard unfeeling heart, a flirt, a fool,
 My daughter's tyrant and my lover's tool,
 I hoped the bitter pill he'd overcome,
 By making up an epilogue sugar-plum.
 But no!—Madam, said he, take my advice,
 And conquer feelings which are much too nice:
 Fear not to hold the mirror up to vice.
 We, who paint human characters, must shew them
 Such as they are; or nobody would know them.
 —But, Sir, the sex! A woman!—Very true:
 I'm sorry so many sat for me, while I drew.
 —Sure! Really, Sir—! Nay, don't be angry, Madam;
 Both ate the apple, Eve as well as Adam.
 And, while through thick and thin the passions goad,
 Nor Eve nor Adam stay to pick their road.
 And, as for epilogue, I'll not descend
 Bad play by worse buffoonery to mend.
 —Mister, said I, you are too wise by half;
 Folks don't come here to learn, they come to laugh:
 And, if they choose like Hottentots their meat,
 You must provide them what they please to eat.
 Lord, Sir! The beauties of proportion never please
 Such as delight in frippery and frieze!
 Do we not see, by man of travell'd taste
 In open hall on rising pillar plac'd,
 Griffon or Sphinx th' insulted eye before,
 While Plato's bust stands hid behind the door?*

But

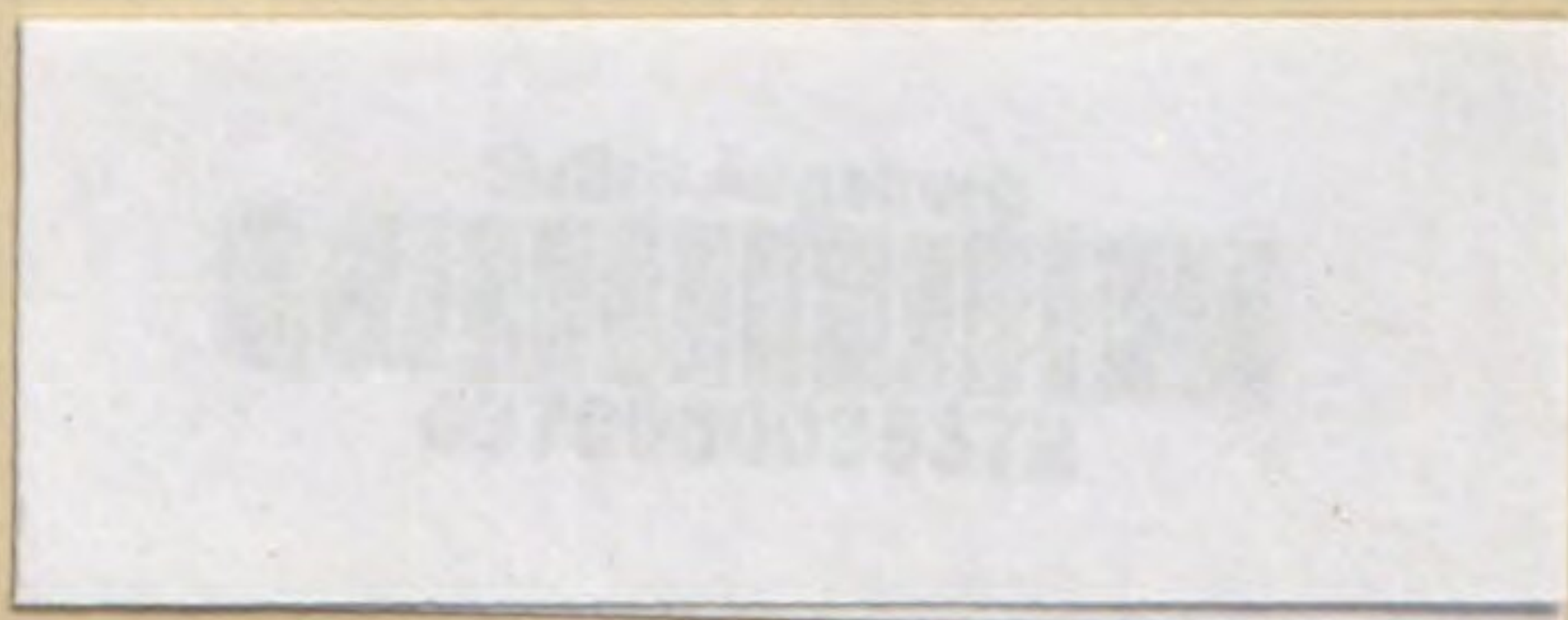
*But good advice I find is thrown away!
—Yes, good advice is like a rainy day;
Which, though it make our barns and coffers full,
Is often splenetic, and always dull.
Our common cause, then, let us fairly trust
With those who are to sense and nature just.
(To the audience.)*

*The richest soil, and most invig'rate seed,
Will here and there infested be with weed:
The gaudy poppy rears its broad bull head
Among the wheat, somnif'rous dews to shed:
Then, where rank couch-grass, fern, or tares are found,
'Tis yours to hand-weed, horse-hoe, clear, and till the
ground.*

FINIS.

L a

Holcroft





Holcroft, Thomas,

The road to ruin a comedy, as it is acted at the theatre royal, Covent
Garden

London 1796

Augsburg, Staats- und Stadtbibliothek -- LA 2417

urn:nbn:de:bvb:12-bsb11257542-0